THE ARTLESS LOVERS.

A

NOVEL.

IN A

SERIES of LETTERS

FROM

Miſs LUCY WHEATLY in Town, to Miſs ANNABELL GRIERSON in the Country.

VOL. II.

"Oh! artleſs Love, where the Soul moves the Tongue,
"And only Nature ſpeaks what Nature thinks."

DRYDEN.

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BRITISH MUSEUM
30 MAY 61

LETTERS

FROM

Miss LUCY WHEATLY

In Town,

TO

Miss ANNABELL GRIERSON

In the Country.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Miſs Wheatly to Miſs Grierson.

WHERE are you, my deareſt Annabell? Nothing diſagreeable, I hope, prevents your writing. It ſeems to me a tedious while ſince I heard from the Grange; but as I know that you expect me to go on, without waiting for your reply, I obey you.

I was laſt night at the play, accompanied by Lady Julia and Sir Edward Balchen. I ſhould have been extremely entertained with the performance, had not my attention been taken off by the ſudden appearance of Wentworth, as ſoon as the curtain was drawn up, in the oppoſite part of the houſe. I did not, I ſuppoſe, ſee him when he firſt came in, as Sir Edward, who ſat next me, was giving me an entertaining account of a principal performer; for Lady Julia, touching me with her fan, ſaid, "Mr. Wentworth, Miſs Wheatly." I coloured at the loved name, and returned the reſpectful bow which he made me: luckily, Sir Edward's head was turned another way; but he was in ſo lively a humour all the evening, that I could not poſſibly apply myſelf ſolely to the obſervation of Wentworth, whoſe looks were entirely fixed on me: beſides, I dreaded Sir Edward's obſerving

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me, as he has a great deal of penetration, ſo that I was obliged to be very circumſpect in my behaviour. He alſo bowed acroſs to Wentworth, with that familiarity which is common to thoſe who have been long acquainted.

When the play was over, ſhall I confeſs the truth? I expected to ſee Wentworth ready at the box-door to take care of me; but no ſuch thing happened: I was forced, therefore, to give my hand to Sir Edward. What a diſappointment! however, by the time we were in the paſſage, as I turned round to look if I could ſee him any where, I found him cloſe behind me, leading Lady Julia. Will you believe me, Annabell, I was mortified; I was hurt: a ſigh, which I would willingly have ſuppreſſed, eſcaped me; but I hope neither he nor Sir Edward heard it. There was, indeed, a great crowd, and by that

he might have been hindered from getting near us ſooner.

We had ſo much difficulty to reach the coach, that Wentworth had no opportunity, if he had been ever ſo well inclined, to ſay any thing to me. I only heard him pronounce my name, as Sir Edward aſſiſted me to ſtep into the coach.

When we were driven away, and left him ſtanding there, my fooliſh heart trembled, and my eager eyes ſtill ſought to find him among the crowd. When I had loſt all hopes of ſeeing him any where, I became thoughtful, abſent, and regardleſs of every thing that was ſaid to me. Having miſtaken the meaning of two or three things, which Sir Edward and Lady Julia had mentioned to me, I bluſhed, though in the dark, at my folly, and reſolved to hold my tongue, that I might commit no more blunders. My ſilence, oc-

occaſioned by the reverie into which I was thrown, alarmed my company: Sir Edward earneſtly aſked me, if I was not well? I ſcarce know what anſwer I returned him; but I remember that he was much more aſſiduous about me than he had yet been. We ſet Lady Julia down at the Earl's. When we came home, he would go in with me to ſee me houſed, that he might be certain, he ſaid, I was not indiſpoſed.

I did not bear this examination at all well. I bluſhed, I turned pale by turns, and thereby made him more particular in his enquiries about me: I imputed my want of ſpirits to my want of reſt, as I had ſat up the night before. This brought on the ſubject of our morning converſation. Sir Edward blamed me extremely in a very free, but rather a tender manner, for running the riſque of in-

juring my health, by ſitting up all night, and going to the play on the following one. He then began to be inquiſitive about the proceedings of Sir George with regard to Amy. My uncle related them in his ludicrous way, which I thought did him no honour. I could not help expreſſing my diſlike at it. He replied, with a kind of ſneer at my romantic notions of a man's virtue, while Harriot joined moſt heartily in the laugh with him. Sir Edward, I obſerved, looked very ſerious all the time, and when my uncle had finiſhed, with a look at him, as if he was ſure of his agreeing to all that he had ſaid, told him, that he did not pretend to be ſo very indifferent to women, nor to have ſuch an entire command over his paſſions, as to be able always to practiſe ſelf-denial; but that he had ever been of opinion, that the man who attempted to ſeduce an innocent, virtuous woman, was the moſt villainous

lainous of his ſpecies, and deſerved to be publickly ſtigmatized as a diſgrace to it.

Neither my uncle, aunt, nor Miſs Blonden, I perceived, reliſhed Sir Edward's ſentiments; but as they made him no reply, he wiſhed us a good night, and took himſelf away.

My mind was ſo entirely taken up with the unexpected appearance of Wentworth, and my diſappointment, ariſing from my not having been able to ſpeak a word to him, that though I went early to bed, I ſcarce cloſed my eyes, and roſe as much unrefreſhed as I was the morning before, when I had ſat up the preceding night.

Adieu! my deareſt girl; may you be happier than

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

LETTER XXXIX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY Annabell! my deareſt friend! you will now, I am well aſſured, join with me in praiſing my much-admired, my moſt deſerving Wentworth.

My hand trembles ſo that I can hardly hold my pen: perhaps he is, at this inſtant, no more. It is but too probable, that there exiſts no longer in this world the only man whom I can ever love. Oh! Miſs Grierſon, can I bear that agonizing, that diſtracting thought? Were I certain that my fears are well-founded, I ſhould pray moſt fervently to be releaſed from this world of ſorrow and diſappointment. But, till my dreadful apprehenſions are realized

lized (Heaven forbid they ſhould!) I will, with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, intreat the all-gracious Being whom he adores, to ſpare the moſt worthy, the moſt beloved of men.

I muſt inform you from whence theſe terrifying conjectures ariſe, which torment me the more, becauſe I am but too ſenſible that I am myſelf the unfortunate cauſe of them.

I told you, if you remember, that my Amy was removed to my room, to be near me. This morning ſhe went up to her former apartment, to collect her things together: looking for ſomething in that cloſet where ſhe had found Sir George, ſhe ſaw a letter lying on the ground, the ſuperſcription of which was torn. She brought it down to me, and as ſhe gave it into my hand half open and tum-

bled, as if it had lain ſome time in his pocket, I ſaw Wentworth's name at the bottom.

This diſcovery raiſed my curioſity; and as the letter was open, I could by no means reſtrain the gratification of it; but, for the gratification of it, how ſeverely have I been puniſhed!

I have incloſed the copy of it for your peruſal. My ſpirits are too much depreſſed to permit me to write more at preſent: I am alſo aſtoniſhed that I have heard nothing from you; your kind, your friendly letters will be now more welcome than ever. Think, my deareſt Annabell, how much I ſtand in need of conſolation, and ſay all you can to comfort your moſt afflicted,

but very affectionate,

L. W.

LETTER XL.

To Sir GEORGE ACKLAND.

(Incloſed in the former.)

"SIR,

I RECEIVED your letter; but as the amiable lady whom you mention has thought proper to reject you, I am at liberty to make my addreſſes to her, without giving you the ſlighteſt pretence to call me to an account for ſo doing.

For the lady now in queſtion I have ſo true an eſteem, ſo great a veneration, that I would ſooner loſe my life than venture to diſpute her favour, or call a bluſh into her cheek, on being made, for my ſake, the idle talk of the town. That Miſs Wheatly's character, there-

fore

fore, may not be trifled with, I am not aſhamed of declining your challenge; but I am alſo urged by higher conſiderations, not to meet you upon hoſtile terms; conſiderarions of which ſhe will, I dare ſay, approve, whether ſhe condeſcends to liſten to my addreſſes or not. I am planted here by the will of the Almighty, whom I moſt devoutly revere: I endeavour, as far as lies in my power, to be a worthy member of ſociety, and to fulfill the duties of the ſtation in which Providence has placed me: ſhall I then dare to ruſh into his preſence uncalled, and appear before him unrequired? Shall I be guilty too of the atrocious crime of murder, bathed in the blood of a fellow-creature, merely to gratify his paſſion and his pride? I wear a ſword, Sir George, as well as you; but it is for the protection of the innocent, for the reſcue of the oppreſſed, and for the

pre-

preſervation of that life which was lent me by my Maker, and which I am determined to defend, till he thinks fit to demand it. Remember alſo, that I carry a cane, to correct thoſe who treat me with inſolence undeſerved.

Theſe are my ſentiments concerning duels, to which I ſhall ſtrictly adhere, and to which I ſhall always freely ſubſcribe my name,

HENRY WENTWORTH."

Peter Catlin
The Bride
LET.
Nancy

LETTER XLI.

Miſs GRIERSON to Miſs WHEATLY.

I AM made happy, my deareſt Lucy, happy beyond my moſt ſanguine expectations; by the man too in the world to whom I would not chuſe to be obliged; to the only man in the world whom I muſt hate, in ſpite of his great merit, and the infinite ſervice which he has been of to me. Yes, my Lucy, your Wentworth is the man who has made your Annabell, your friend, bleſt beyond her hopes: and yet, at this very moment, when I am ſo much indebted to him, I cannot help wiſhing that you had never ſeen him, or that you could transfer the inclination, which you feel for him, to another as deſerving. It is my friendſhip, my eſteem for

for my dear Miſs Wheatly, which fills me with ſuch, to you ſtrange, ſentiments. Theſe are riddles, you will, perhaps ſay: here then is an explanation of them.

Captain Wilſon, while he was in Germany, was promiſed a commiſſary's place by General H——, upon his return to England, and, accordingly, brought letters from that officer to a nobleman here, who had it entirely in his power to ſerve him; but this nobleman, on ſeeing his diſpatches, which he carried to him as ſoon as he arrived, tho' he could not be admitted to him for ſeveral days, told him that he came too late, as he had already diſpoſed of that place, adding, that he was ſorry he could not oblige the General.

Mr. Wilſon, between the hours of attendance at the great man's door, in order to get admittance to him, had carried a pacquet from Mr.

Mr. Farnham, who is now in France, and with whom he made ſome acquaintance during his ſtay there, at his requeſt, to Mr. Wentworth, who received him with that politeneſs which is natural to him, preſſed him to dine, and, when Mr. Wilſon took his leave, invited him to come again, while he remained in town: yet all this time they were quite ſtrangers to each other's love-affairs: nor did Mr. Wilſon wait on Mr. Wentworth again, till meeting him accidentally in the park, and ſeeing him look very melancholy, he preſſed him to go home with him, and kindly aſked the cauſe of his dejection. Mr. Wilſon told him very freely the diſappointments he had met with, and how much they had affected him, more particularly, as they would put off his marriage with the lady whom he had long loved, perhaps for ever; as he could not

not think of making propoſals, either to her or her father, till he was lucky enough to find ſome lucrative eſtabliſhment, ſuitable to her fortune. He concealed, all this time, my name and habitation, but delivered his tale in ſo moving a manner, that the generous Wentworth ſympathized with him, and, with a ſigh, ſaid " Nobody, Mr. Wilſon, can more truly compaſſionate your ſituation than myſelf: I know but too well what it is to want the power to make the only perſon in the world I love and value happy. I have ſome friends who will aſſiſt me in relieving ſuffering merit; to them I will immediately apply; when you call again, in about two or three days, I hope I ſhall be able to ſerve you.

My Wilſon thanked him, in terms which ſhewed how truly ſenſible he was of his obliging behaviour.

haviour to him. Before he ventured to return to him again, fearful of appearing too importunate, he received a note from Mr. Wentworth, to inform him that his buſineſs was accompliſhed. You may be ſure, my dear, he was not wanting in his acknowledgments; but he did not write any thing relating to this affair to me, not caring to keep me in ſuſpence: he came himſelf down to bring the agreeable news. I deſired him, however, to let me add a line in his letter to Mr. Wentworth, that the amiable man may know it is the friend of his admired Miſs Wheatly, his old acquaintance Annabell, whom he has ſo much obliged.

Would to h——n, my deareſt Lucy, that Mr. Wilſon and I could, in return, any way contribute to your union; but as we are not in a ſituation to promote that, I cannot

ſtill

ſtill help wiſhing that he was far leſs deſerving of your hand, which he ſeems not in a condition to obtain. Ought I not, indeed, for that very reaſon, to hate him, all deſpicable as he is? becauſe the more you are attached to him, the more unhappy you will be: were he leſs eſteemable, you would, I am pretty ſure, ſoon withdraw your regard, and beſtow it upon a more worthy object.

As I am very well aſſured that, next to ſeeing yourſelf happy, you wiſh to ſee your Annabell ſo, I ſhall give you pleaſure by informing you, that my father has received Mr. Wilſon with great cordiality, and accepted of his propoſals, which are greatly to my advantage. In a few weeks we are to be united: then, if my grandmother's health will permit me to leave Fairgrove-Manor, Mr. Wilſon propoſes to carry me croſs the country on a viſit to his father. You

You will eaſily imagine, my dear, that I am rather hurried at preſent, and will therefore be the leſs ſurprized if you don't receive letters ſo often as my inclination prompts me to write to you; for in the midſt of all the felicity which I enjoy, I ſigh when I think of my Lucy, and cannot be perfectly happy while ſhe remains in ſo unſettled a ſtate.

I am quite ſhocked at Sir George's behaviour to your family; yet think your uncle's countenancing ſuch a man muſt very much encourage ſuch attempts. Happy are you, my dear, to have eſcaped him yourſelf; that you may ever eſcape not only him, but all kinds of uneaſineſs, is the ſincere wiſh of,

Your never-wavering

A. G.

P. S. Juſt

P. S. Juſt as I was going to ſeal this, your laſt came to my hand, with the incloſed one from Wentworth to Sir George. How noble, how exalted are his ſentiments! How like a gentleman and a Chriſtian he writes! Were every man capable of acting in this ſpirited manner, in ſpite of the prejudices of the world, duels would be entirely aboliſhed. I ſhewed Mr. Wentworth's letter to my Father, and to Mr. Wilſon; they are charmed both with the writer and the man. I will not tell you all that the latter ſaid in his praiſe, becauſe it will only increaſe your eſteem for him. And can I, ungrateful girl, I, who am indebted to him for all my preſent felicity, talk of him thus to my Lucy? Yes, I muſt, my ſweet friend; as your future peace is ſo dear to me, I muſt endeavour to reſtore tranquility to a mind which has been but too long diſturbed,

diſturbed, till Wentworth has it in his power to be more explicit, were he a thouſand times more worthy than he is. I muſt ſay, that the leſs you think of him, the better. Continue to write to me as uſual.

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LETTER XLII.

Miſs WHEATLY to Miſs GRIERSON.

WHEN I ſent away my laſt letter to you, my Annabell, my ſpirits were ſo much agitated, that I hardly knew what I ſaid or did. They are now more compoſed, becauſe I have heard that Sir George is engaged in a purſuit after Miſs Weſtern, a very fine girl, with a large fortune. I hope, therefore, that he will no longer moleſt either Mr. Wentworth or me. This piece of intelligence I received this morning from Sir Edward Balchen. It ſeemed to diſconcert Harriet ſo much, that ſhe was near fainting away, for we all ſat together when he communicated it. You will naturally ſuppoſe that her diſorder did not eſcape the notice of any of us, though

we

we all diſcovered our feeling upon this occaſion in a different manner.

My aunt ſpoke firſt, though contrary to her uſual cuſtom, as ſhe is not apt to be much affected with what paſſes in converſation, and ſaid, "Blonden, child, what is the matter with you?" I, frighted, ran to aſſiſt her, while Sir Edward kept his ſeat and eyed her, I thought, contemptuouſly. My uncle, in his arch way, cried, "You are not breeding, I hope, my dear?" Poor Harriet was vexed with him for his ill-timed raillery, and bluſhed her indignation. I was angry with him myſelf, for making ſuch an odd ſpeech before Sir Edward, who is full of obſervation.

I have not told you, I believe, my dear, that Sir Edward continued the particular aſſiduities which he paid to

to me on the night when I ſaw Wentworth at the play, for ſome time: but I have put a ſtop to them, I hope, in ſome meaſure. I diſcovered ſo much reſerve and coolneſs to him, upon that change in his behaviour, that he ſoon took the hint, and has ſince treated me in his former eaſy unaffected way: I am very glad that he treats me ſo, for two reaſons: in the firſt place, he is really both very intelligent and entertaining, and prevents my attention from being fixed on a more intereſting object: in the ſecond place, I often hear, by his means, of Wentworth's motions: for as he is frequently with him, he mentions him of courſe, not in the leaſt ſuſpecting that I have any particular curioſity about him.

But I have not told you how the family of the Clavils go on. Why, ſurprizingly well, thanks to their

generous benefactor, who procured a ſmall, but eaſy place for the old man, as ſoon as he had recovered his ſight; I have furniſhed a little ſhop for his wife, and Sally comes on apace in her buſineſs.

Amy told me the other day, that her aut was a good deal frighted by a viſit from a very fine gentleman, all over gold, who came into her ſhop, and after having aſſured himſelf by ſeveral queſtions that he was not miſtaken, enquired for her daughter. She replied, that ſhe was not at home. "Oh! what, ſhe was actually carried off then by her protector that night, was ſhe, ſaid he, with a ſneer? Nay, he deſerves her, faith! for he fought like a devil for her."

You are under a miſtake, I believe, Sir, replied Mrs. Clavil, for that gentleman brought home my daughter directly

directly that night, and has not ſeen her ſince.

" Not ſeen her! cried he, Why, woman, you muſt be out of your ſenſes, to ſuppoſe that a man would venture his life for a girl whom he does not deſire to ſee. There are no ſuch knights-errant now-a-days. Tell me, therefore, where he keeps your daughter: when he is tired of her, perhaps I may take her. Such a bloody fighting fellow muſt be deviliſh amorous: but then his love fit will be the ſooner over, and ſo I ſtand ſome chance."

It was a long time before the poor woman could make him believe that Wentworth had reſcued her Sally, and ſaved them all from deſtruction, merely from the goodneſs of his excellent heart, and his great love of virtue.

When ſhe had related his acts of generoſity to him, over and over, with ſo many ſtriking circumſtances which ſufficiently authenticated her narration, and left him no room to queſtion her veracity, he firſt ſtared full in her face, and then turning upon his heel, deſired her to make much of her hero. " He is one, ſaid he, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, and I don't believe he can be matched any where. A man, a young man, and a fine young fellow, to fight ſo furiouſly, and for ſuch a handſome girl, and then to carry her quietly home to her mother. It may be true, but faith it is very ſurprizing."

So ſaying, he went off, to the great joy of Mrs. Clavil, who began to be very much alarmed, leſt he ſhould find out her daughter, and be very troubleſome.

" Every

Every body, you ſee, my Annabell, thinks Wentworth a moſt amiable character, as well as your Lucy; even the moſt profligate; even thoſe who imagine that they have been injured by him: and ſhall *ſhe* then *alone* refuſe her eſteem to the moſt amiable, the moſt deſerving of men? Oh! no,—'tis impoſſible; I am almoſt ready to recall my words when I begged him to ſtay away.

Since I wrote the above I have walked in the park with Lady Julia: we are become inſeparable companions, you will ſay: Sir Edward joined us. He was giving me an intereſting detail of a very pretty woman's diſappointment in love, when we met Wentworth, walking with two other gentlemen. I ſtarted, bluſhed, and wiſhed to hear him ſpeak; but he only bowed, and paſ-

ſed on. He came upon me by ſurprize. I am ſure I looked very fooliſh. That Sir Edward, though a diverting man, is always talking to me juſt when I wiſh to obſerve Wentworth. He looked, I thought, pale and melancholy. I watched to ſee him paſs again: at that unlucky moment the wind blew high, and my hat was carried I know not how far from me. Sir Edward ran after it, and bringing it back, would aſſiſt me in tying it on, juſt when Wentworth met us again. I was almoſt angry with him for fiddling ſo about me, but I could not well help myſelf; and Lady Julia is full as aukward at doing any of theſe odd things as a man; and ſo I loſt another opportunity of ſpeaking to Wentworth. I met him no more that morning, but I was with the ſame party laſt night at the Oratorio: there, to my great joy, he came in; but the houſe was ſo crowded that I could

I could ſee but little of him. I was, indeed, ſo lifted up above all earthly objects, but him, by the awful grandeur of ſome parts of the compoſition, and ſo melted by the more pathetic paſſages, that had I been near him, I am afraid I ſhould have ſaid ſomething too expreſſive, perhaps, of the diſpoſition I was in towards him.

When I ſaw his dejected attitude, for he ſat ſide-ways, leaning his head upon his hand, and perceived that his eyes were fixed on me, in a very mournful manner, I could ſcarcely keep mine from ſhedding a flood of tears. Sir Edward, ſtill too attentive to me, obſerved the change of my countenance; and thinking, that as I was ſo extremely affected by the muſic, my ſpirits would be hurt by it, endeavoured between the acts to give a turn to my thoughts, by telling the moſt truly

ludicrous ſtories, with ſo much humour, that I could not forbear ſmiling at them, though I wiſhed he had choſen another time for the repetition of them. My ſmiles were directed to Wentworth; for though he was at a diſtance, he was, I imagined, near enough to diſcover eaſily every alteration in my countenance; but he did not appear to underſtand me in the ſenſe I wiſhed to be underſtood, for his melancholy ſeemed to increaſe. His melancholy did not make me more chearful you may be ſure. I began to fill my head with ſo many frightful ideas, that, at laſt, I was almoſt ready to faint. Lady Julia and Sir Edward were alarmed; the latter to ſuch a degree, that he propoſed my going out: and, indeed, had not the fear of being too much obſerved, and the pleaſure of ſtill beholding Wentworth, as long as he ſtill remained in the houſe, checked me, I ſhould certainly

tainly have accepted his offer: I was quite ill, and was obliged to lean againſt the box, on one ſide: Sir Edward ſupported me on the other, while poor helpleſs Lady Julia was too much frighted to be of any ſervice at all.

When the performance was over, I determined to ſtay in the houſe as long as I decently could, to ſee if Wentworth would come and ſpeak to me. This lingering of mine was perfectly agreeable to Sir Edward, who was afraid that we ſhould go out too ſoon, as the great crowd had made it extremely hot. My wiſhes too were alſo, at laſt, gratified. Wentworth made his way through the crowd, and came up to us; but not till the over-officious Sir Edward was wrapping my cloak about me, and had got my hand in his, to lead me out.

Wentworth juſt threw his eyes on me, and then caſting them down, ſaid, with a faultering voice, " I was afraid you was not well, Miſs Wheatly: I thought —

Here he ſtopped, confuſed, as if fearful of having ſaid too much; and then looking up again at me, with a kind of corrected tenderneſs, added, " Can I be of any ſervice to you, Madam?"

" Oh! no, ſaid Sir Edward, briſkly anſwering for me, but now I think of it, my dear Harry, you will oblige me by taking care of Lady Julia."

During this, I was ſtammering out my thanks to Wentworth, but in ſo aukward a manner, that I really ſeemed to apologize for doing what needed no excuſe, for giving my hand to the gentleman who was re-

related to my friend, and who had been of our party the whole evening.

Don't you know, my dear, that it is oftener more prudent to let things quite alone, than to ſay too much about them. I was in this ſituation. I was abſolutely confuſed and diſconcerted; and though I thought, but a moment before, that I could have ſaid a thouſand things to Wentworth, I was not able to bring out a ſingle word. As for him, he looked ſtill more diſconcerted than myſelf; and I imagined that he was ſo, becauſe he was not able to come near me. We all four, therefore, proceeded, a ſecond time, thro' the play-houſe paſſage, much in the ſame manner we had paſſed through it about a fortnight ago. All of us were ſilent except Sir Edward, who again handed me into the coach, but not without aſking Wentworth if he ſhould ſet him down.

I then

I then thought that I was ſure of the opportunity I had ſo long ſecretly ſighed after; but, to my great aſtoniſhment, Wentworth refuſed to accept of Sir Edward's polite offer, and took his leave of me only with a reſpectful bow.

For a few moments I fell into a reverie, and accuſed him of great negligence and want of affection; but being willing to flatter myſelf that he refuſed Sir Edward's civility for fear of giving offence to me, I became more compoſed with regard to him: I reſolved however to oblige Sir Edward to be ſtill more diſtant in his behaviour to me.

When I was alone, Wentworth's melancholy air, and the reſpectful diſtance which he kept, only to make himſelf agreeable to me, engroſſed all my thoughts. Why, why

is it not in my power to make him as happy as he deſerves to be!

I have, this moment, received your's, my Annabell: I can ſcarce ſay whether I rejoice more to hear of your approaching happineſs, or to know that my Wentworth (do, let me call him ſo) has been, in a great meaſure, inſtrumental to it. How noble are his ſentiments? and how genteel his behaviour? not to mention his civilities to you, when he had an opportunity, the other night!

My poor Wentworth! perhaps he waited for my ſpeaking of theſe civilities to him: he could not imagine that I was ignorant of what ſo nearly concerned my dear Miſs Grierſon. That name will ſoon be no more. May you, my amiable girl, be poſſeſſed of all the felicity which

which you merit: ſo prays, with the ſincereſt fervour,

Your ever affectionate,

L. W.

P. S. I had forgot to ſay, that I am half angry with you. How could you tell me that you hated Wentworth? and juſt when he had ſo much obliged your future huſband? Why hate him on my account? Let me intreat you, my Annabell, to change theſe ſentiments, and adopt others in their room, others more favourable to him; for I never will, I never can, love another man.

LETTER XLIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

WE have been a good deal alarmed, theſe few days paſt, by a diſagreeable affair which has happened in our family. In my laſt letter, if you remember, I told you of Sir George's attachment to Miſs Weſton, and the ſudden effect which the news of it had upon Miſs Blonden. She has drooped about ever ſince; and the other day I heard, though but indiſtinctly, a warm dialogue between her and my aunt, as our dreſſing rooms are not very far aſunder, which ended with ſeveral reproaches from my aunt for the ſcandalous return ſhe had made to her friendſhip for her, by ſo improper a conduct, which muſt of neceſſity oblige her to put her out of the family.

Theſe

Theſe were ſome of the menaces which I heard, and which Harriet anſwered with a flood of tears. My uncle happened to come up in the the midſt of this *embarras*, and would know the occaſion of it. Poor Harriet then withdrew, ſobbing, to her own apartment.

As I had neither curioſity nor inclination to liſten, I took up my book again, to which their loud converſation had prevented me from attending. Soon afterwards my uncle came out, and my aunt called after him, " Well, then, tell her in what manner you pleaſe."

He entered my dreſſing-room directly, and ſaid, " So, Lucy, that fooliſh girl, Harriet, has brought herſelf into a fine dilemma. She has had an affair with Sir George; a ſilly toad; and my wife has luckily diſ-

diſcovered it, by the dropping of a letter which ſhe had deſigned for him, and which jealouſy, on hearing that he had a new *flame*, provoked her to write. Faith 'tis a lucky incident, however, or we might have had an unexpected lying-in here. But ſhe ſhall turn out: I'll have no baſtards born in my houſe. I ſhall, nevertheleſs, talk to that young raſcal about it: he ought to provide for his baby and the girl too."

Here he ſtopped.—I was, I think, my dear Anabell, never more aſtoniſhed; not at Sir George, concerning whom I am too apt, I am afraid, to believe every thing that is bad, but at poor Harriet. Though ſhe was pert and vain, I did not imagine that ſhe would have had ſo little regard to her reputation. How extremely am I concerned for her? How pitiable an object is ſuch a young perſon, ſo miſerably degrad-

ed

ed in the eye of the world, and ſtill more in her own, I ſhould ſuppoſe? If ſhe really loves him, her ſituation is worſe and worſe. What anguiſh muſt ſhe feel by knowing that he is going to be married!

I was, I own, ſo ſurprized and concerned, that I ſaid every thing to ſoften my uncle in her favour, and to induce him to compaſſionate this poor unhappy girl. I begged him, in the ſtrongeſt terms, not to expoſe her weakneſs, but to huſh up this dreadful affair, and to part with her, if her departure was abſolutely neceſſary, in the mildeſt manner; and to ſecure a retreat for her, where ſhe might bury her ſhame at leaſt, if not her ſorrow, which, I hoped, time and a ſincere repentance would mitigate. "Conſider, my dear Sir, ſaid I, how many unhappy people, under the influence of an almoſt ungovernable inclination, have been brought

brought into a condition, which, on mature reflection, their ſouls abhor; when treated harſhly, how often do they, deſpairing of being able to regain the good opinion of their friends, fly either to ſuicide, or plunge into a courſe of promiſcuous proſtitution. If ſuch people had been tenderly uſed, they might have been ſo ſtruck with the folly of their paſt conduct, as never, though under the ſtrongeſt temptation, to offend again. Let theſe hopes of her future amendment, my dear uncle, prevail on you to make a proviſion for her, that ſhe may not be obliged to have recourſe to the unworthy man who once, no doubt, pretended to love her. Give me leave alſo, through your hands, to add ſomething, to make her retreat more ſupportable."

"Thou art a good girl, Lucy, replied my uncle; a very good girl, indeed. I did not think that ſuch a little

a little prude as I took you to be could have ſo much compaſſion for a fallen ſiſter. This lenity in behalf of poor ſilly Blonden, convinces me more than you have ſaid or done, that you have an honeſt heart. I always had a moſt inſuperable averſion to your women outrageouſly virtuous."

"I don't rightly comprehend your meaning, Sir, ſaid I: according to my idea of virtue, it ought to be more in the heart than on the lips."

"Right, child, ſaid he; I approve of your diſtinction; but as to this Harriet, ſhe was always a vain idle baggage, and wanted to make her fortune by marriage. She had always a deſign upon ſome rich young fellow or other, and now ſhe is caught in her own ſnare. I proteſt I don't blame Sir George half

half ſo much, for I'll lay any wager that ſhe began firſt."

" Don't think ſo hardly of her, Sir, ſaid I: Sir George's behaviour convinces me every day, more and more, that he is one of the worſt young men of his rank and fortune in town. I have had ſome proofs of his wickedneſs: I have a proof of it in my pocket, at this moment, which you have not yet ſeen," I then produced Wentworth's anſwer to his challenge.

My uncle run it over haſtily at firſt: then peruſed it a ſecond time more deliberately.

" This is a very extraordinary letter, upon my ſoul, child, ſaid he; Ackland was a puppy to challenge him, to be ſure: but my friend Harry will not, I am afraid, be able to ſupport his character for approved courage,

courage, when his ſentiments come to be known."

" I am not at all afraid, Sir, replied I, of the diſcovery of his ſentiments. He has approved himſelf a man of true courage more than once. The man who dreads to offend his God by murdering a fellow creature in cold blood, but who will, at any time, venture his life in the defence of the injured, has, in my opinion, more true magnanimity than the braveſt man who ever fought a duel. In ſhort, duelling is nothing but a kind of faſhionable encouragement of murder. Duelling is generally occaſioned by reſentment or revenge; two paſſions by which half the calamities in the world are produced. Muſt I, becauſe I have offended you in the groſſeſt manner, by taking your wife or your miſtreſs from you, ſtill add to the injury by endeavouring to cut your throat, or by

by giving you a fair opportunity to cut mine; and thereby either murder you, or make you guilty of the greateſt of all crimes, in order to put you upon the ſame ignominious footing with myſelf? This is the real ſtate of the caſe, Sir; this is the true definition of duelling, when ſtripped of all the faſhionable cant of courage and honour; terms which are always wrongly applied when duelling is recommended by them."

"Umph! why really, cried my uncle, this is quite a counterpart to Harry Wentworth's letter: whether you taught him, or he you, I know not, but your notions are mighty ſimilar; but I fancy you will not meet with many people of the ſame way of thinking."

As I found that my uncle was tired of being ſerious, or, to ſpeak more charitably, not diſpoſed to be

ſo

ſo any longer, I ſmiled, and told him, "that one perſon of my way of thinking would be enough for me." Upon which he laughed, and ſaid, "that I was a whimſical girl; but that I certainly deſerved to be happy as well as his friend Harry, who was, he believed, an excellent young man."

"He is indeed, my dear uncle," ſaid I. I then told him of the many proofs he had given of the goodneſs of his heart, and of his perſonal courage; and he left me with a much higher opinion than he ever had of my admired Wentworth.

When I ſaw my aunt again, I found that ſhe had deſired my uncle to mention Miſs Blonden's unhappy affair to me. She ſeemed to be greatly affected by it, and ſaid ſhe would carry her directly to her mother, with whom ſhe ſhould remain till ſhe could tell how to diſpoſe of her.

Poor

Poor, unhappy girl, how I pity her wretched ſituation; yet I have the great ſatisfaction to be informed by Mrs. Mordaunt, that my uncle had vaſtly magnified her misfortune, which is ſufficiently unhappy, as ſhe has been deſerted by a man on whom ſhe had, it ſeems, ſet her heart; and who, ſhe ſays, vowed, in the moſt ſolemn manner, to marry her: but I don't find that ſhe can produce any proof of ſuch a promiſe in writing, without which ſhe will not be able to make him perform it. My uncle, however, perſiſts in declaring, that he will endeavour to oblige him to make ſome proviſion for her: and indeed he ought, I think, on all accounts, particularly for making her appear ſtill more guilty than ſhe really is. By what my aunt ſays, there is no fear of a little one. I am heartily glad of it.

My uncle gives himſelf too great a liberty in ſpeaking. What he ſaid to me will not injure Miſs Blonden, in my opinion, if ſhe is not guilty. But I am afraid he will have no greater retention of tongue in whatever company he happens to be; not even before his own ſervants: it will be, therefore, quite proper for Harriet to be with her mother.

I always thought a young girl, with little or no fortune, was dangerouſly ſituated in a family in which ſhe was every moment in the way of meeting with young, agreeable men, far ſuperior to her ſtation in life: but an idle hope of making their fortunes, as it is called, by marrying men greatly above them in rank, has been, I am afraid, the ruin of innumerable girls, who, if they would have ſat down contented with the ſphere in which Providence had

had placed them, might have made excellent wives to thoſe who were ſuitable to them in birth, &c. and have become very uſeful members of ſociety. When people attempt to riſe to a ſtation conſiderably higher than that to which they were born, they frequently meet with diſappointments which embitter their future lives; or elſe, by making an aukward appearance in a ſituation for which nature never deſigned them, render themſelves objects of ridicule, and leſſen that eſteem which, by a propriety of conduct and perſevering good behaviour, they would have ſooner or later acquired.

Excuſe theſe reflections, my dear; they will certainly appear unſeaſonable to you, who are, I truſt, upon the point of receiving the reward of a well ſpent, exemplary youth; for ſo, I think, I may eſteem your marriage with a man of merit, who has,

during ſo long an abſence, and at ſo great a diſtance from you, preſerved his fidelity unſhaken.

Be aſſured, my dear Annabell, that I find a ſincere ſatisfaction when I reflect on the happineſs which you are going to enjoy, in paſſing the remainder of your days with ſo valuable a friend, of which not all my preſent uncertainties can deprive me. This is the only reflection, indeed, which affords me any kind of pleaſure. Let me, therefore, my deareſt Miſs Grierſon, intreat you to give me the earlieſt intelligence when this happy union is completed. I will be content with a few lines, while you are hurried about it, but whenever you can find a leiſure hour, I hope you will employ it, with your uſual kindneſs, in giving friendly admonitions to

Your moſt ſincere,

And ever affectionate,

L. W.

LETTER XLIV.

Miſs GRIERSON to Miſs WHEATLY.

DID you think to ſlip through my fingers ſo, my beloved Lucy? Could you imagine your Annabell, your loving, your moſt loved friend, would ſteal a wedding in ſo ſly a manner, without ſo much as naming the day, without even inviting you to her marriage?

Happy, indeed, ſhould I be, my friend, could that or any thing elſe prevail on you to come down to the abbey once again among us. But, I am afraid that your friendſhip, ſincere as I know it to be for me, nay even that your deſire to ſee me happy, will not bring you above an hundred miles from the place to which you have ſo ſtrong, ſo powerful an attachment.

Ah! Lucy, why will you not let me hate Wentworth, when he deprives me of ſo amiable a friend? And yet my Wilſon is ſo perpetually praiſing him to me, that, but on your account, I ſhould not, I believe, have any diſlike to a man, who has certainly a great number of perſonal attractions and valuable qualities: but, till we know the cauſe of his inconſiſtent behaviour, (may I not call it inconſiſtent, my dear?) you are right in keeping him at a proper diſtance, though I plainly perceive that it is with the greateſt difficulty you can bring yourſelf to do ſo.

My dear Mr. Wilſon has been ſo very urgent with me to give him leave (I uſe his own words) to viſit his father, and has ſo politely inſiſted upon my making that viſit with him, that my father has conſented

ſented to fix Tueſday for the day. Do not, therefore, charge me with not having given you timely notice, my dear. You may ſet out a week hence, and be at the Grange long before the canonical hour. As a ſtill greater inducement, I freely give you leave to ſee Wentworth before you leave London. When you ſee him, pray let Mr. Wilſon's and my moſt reſpectful acknowledgements to him be remembered.

I will not tell you all that my father ſaid, when Mr. Wilſon told him, how greatly he was indebted to him; but I will tell you, that he full as much deſires to ſee you, as does

Your ſincerely affectionate

A. G.

LETTER XLV.

Miſs WHEATLY to Miſs GRIERSON.

IN what anxiety, in what diſtreſs, my deareſt Annabell, did your laſt letter find me? From the latter, I flatter myſelf that I ſhall be relieved: the former, perhaps, may be never removed.

On the very morning I received good Mr. Grierſon's and your kind invitations to be preſent at that ceremony which will, I hope, make my deſerving friend the happieſt of her ſex, I was ſitting in my dreſſing-room, reflecting, with great ſatisfaction, on the account which I had before me of your agreeable ſituation, when Sir Edward Balchen came in. He has ſometimes taken that liberty, tho' I had never perfectly approved of it. I was juſt conſidering in what manner I ſhould let

let him be acquainted with my diſ-approbation, when, caſting my eyes on him, I thought he looked uncommonly dejected; he even ſeemed quite inattentive to me, threw himſelf into a chair without the leaſt ceremony, and ſpoke not a ſingle word.

This extraordinary behaviour excited my curioſity, and I aſked him what was the matter with him.

" I muſt beg your pardon, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, I was ſo loſt in thought when I entered the room, that though I came here on purpoſe to ſeek you, hoping to find ſome relief in your converſation, I am really ſo much concerned that I do not know what I ſay or do. But it is incumbent on me to acquaint you with the cauſe of my concern, in order to apologize for the negligence of my behaviour."

"I am this inſtant come from the bedſide of the moſt deſerving man of my acquaintance, who lies, I am afraid, at the point of death: Muſt I add the cauſe of his illneſs? It was occaſioned by his loſing the affection of an amiable woman, whom he has long loved. His affairs were ſo unfortunately ſituated, that he could not come to an open *eclairciſſement*, though the lady was no ſtranger to his extreme paſſion for her, and he flattered himſelf with the hopes of a return, when he could properly avow it: but he has had reaſon to think, that ſhe has beſtowed the eſteem which he wiſhed and expected to enjoy on another. This, together with his perſiſting in concealing his paſſion, for I almoſt wrung the ſecret by force from his boſom, preyed upon his mind, and brought on a malignant fever; ſo that the phyſicians deſpair of his recovery."

"My

" My G—d, cried I, moved with his deſcription of this unfortunate man's ſituation, and the affecting manner with which he related his narrative; for he looked wild with grief. Why do you not go to this lady, and tell her in what an unhappy way your friend is upon her account; perhaps ſhe may relent, or perhaps he may be miſtaken. Lovers are ſometimes jealous when they have little or no reaſon to be ſo."

" I would, ſaid he eagerly, I would by h——n, go to the fartheſt part of the globe to ſave ſo valuable a life, but I cannot prevail on him to tell me who ſhe is. I have made uſe of all the power of friendſhip, all the art I am maſter of, but to no purpoſe; for when I preſſed him with the utmoſt eagerneſs to unboſom himſelf to me, and aſſured him that I would venture my life to relieve him," " No,

Balchen,

Balchen, ſaid he, for ever ſacred be the dear truſt which ſhe has repoſed in me. Let me die; but let her have no reaſon to complain of me. I have no right to accuſe her: I never extorted a promiſe from her: ſhe was free: I had nothing but hope to ſubſiſt upon: ſince that is taken away from me, I have nothing to do but to die."

"This is all the anſwer I could get from him; and if the phyſician had not declared that no medicines would aſſiſt him, if he perſevered in concealing the uneaſineſs which preyed upon his mind, I ſhould not have learnt even what I have related: but upon finding that was the caſe, by repeated queſtions I drew from him all that I have mentioned to you: and I confeſs, Miſs Wheatly, that I feel pangs of ſorrow for him which almoſt unman me. He is the moſt amiable, the moſt benevolent

of

of characters: but you have ſeen him often—Mr. Wentworth is the man I am ſpeaking of."

A piſtol, fired cloſe at my ear, could not have more aſtoniſhed me, could not have frighted me more than the repetition of that dear, that beloved name. To ſay I ſtarted at it, is to ſay nothing; yet I did ſtart, and then ſunk back in my chair, in which I muſt have fainted, had not a flood of tears relieved me.

Sir Edward diſcovered not much leſs aſtoniſhment on ſeeing me in this condition. " H—ns, Madam, cried he, ſtaring at me, are you then the lady ſo beloved by Wentworth? and can you then have ceaſed to love ſuch a man?"

" Oh! Sir Edward, replied I, do not ſpend time ſo precious in aſking queſtions, but fly to your friend: tell

tell him I never changed my ſentiments with regard to him : tell him to take care of his life, if he would preſerve mine. Oh! tell him every thing that can ſave him, but go directly, added I, puſhing him from me, it may be too late.—Oh! my God! he may be loſt for ever."

I could ſay no more, my tears almoſt choaked me ; yet Sir Edward would not ſtir ; he ſtood looking on me, with his eyes fixed, till I grew almoſt frantic with impatience.

" Why will you not go, Sir, ſaid I; even while you ſtand here, he is expiring." I could ſay no more, that horrid reflection almoſt deprived me of ſenſe and motion. But ſtill I ſaw him wavering, whether he ſhould ſtay and aſſiſt me, or go to him. This rouzed me, almoſt to madneſs. I got out of my chair, and laying b th my hands on his ſhoulder, " For the

the love of Heaven, Sir, ſaid I, go this inſtant." He at laſt moved, but with reluctant ſteps, as if he was afraid to leave me. " Make haſte, continued I, dear Sir Edward, loſe no time, ſpare no pains to ſave this amiable man: and when you have eaſed his mind, be compaſſionate enough to call on me again, and tell me how you found him.

I ſighed deeply: my face glowed like ſcarlet, and I hung down my head, confuſed with a mixture of baſhfulneſs and terror.

Sir Edward, whoſe eyes had not been one moment averted from me, turned round, and, taking my hand, " Be comforted, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, nor bluſh, though your bluſhes are infinitely becoming, as proofs of your eſteem for ſuch a man as Wentworth: he is worthy of your heart, valuable as it is; and I hope that the im-

immediate aſſurance that you preſerve that eſteem will ſave him. I will be with you again preſently."

He flew out of the room, and I, falling on my knees, implored the all-gracious Being, whoſe mercy is over all his works, to ſpare a life ſo infinitely dear to me. This humble petition helped to collect my ſcattered thoughts, but yet I could not any way comprehend why he ſhould imagine that I ceaſed to love him; or, what puzzled me ſtill more, why he ſhould think that I preferred another to him. I was as much at a loſs alſo to gueſs at his ſuppoſed rival. Lord William R— was the only man who had made any offer ſince Sir George Ackland; and to him I had behaved with ſo much indifference, that he had for ſome time left off viſiting the family.

I ſpent

I ſpent all the time Sir Edward was abſent in a ſtate of mind impoſſible to be deſcribed. To think of Wentworth's being dangerouſly ill, was ſufficiently alarming; but to believe that I was the cauſe of his illneſs, was abſolute diſtraction. Every moment did I offer up my petitions to the Supreme Giver of all good things to ſave him, to ſave him at leaſt from a death ſo dreadful to me. Though I really believe that I could not ſurvive his loſs at any time, yet the thought of his having loſt his life for me, would certainly drive me to diſtraction.

While I was counting every moment, and thinking Sir Edward would never return, my uncle came up ſtairs. "So, Lucy, ſaid he, (without diſcovering any kind of ſurprize at the condition I was in, for I

was walking up and down the room, with my handkerchief in my hand, my eyes ſwelled with tears, that ran plentifully down my face, and which was as pale as aſhes) you have heard of poor Harry Wentworth's illneſs, I ſee. I juſt now ſaw Dr. F—'s chariot, by accident, ſtanding at Mr. Farnham's door; I pulled the ſpring for John to ſtop, and aſk who was ill. The ſervant told him that Mr. Wentworth was given over, and that all the family were inconſolable. "Is your maſter returned then from France, ſaid I?" "No, Sir, replied the ſervant, but my miſtreſs has ſent to let him know the danger Mr. Wentworth is in."

My uncle's intelligence did not, you may be ſure, in the leaſt relieve my anxiety: it rather increaſed it, by confirming my fears: but he ſtaid not long to be witneſs of them. He told me that I ſhould make myſelf ſick, if I gave way to crying in ſuch

ſuch a manner: and lifting up his hands and eyes, as if he was aſtoniſhed at my behaviour, left the room.

His abſence, I confeſs, gave me, in the midſt of my ſorrow, a little conſolation: for my impatience to ſee Sir Edward again, alone, was beyond deſcription. I longed to aſk him a thouſand queſtions, though I dreaded to hear his anſwers. At laſt he came, quite out of breath, through haſte. By that haſte he had ſtrongly ſhewn his attention to me, but I was afraid that no good was portended by it. His countenance, however, was more chearful than when he left me. He ran to me, and aſked why I would give myſelf up to ſuch immoderate grief, why I would not wait patiently till he returned?

"Oh!

" Oh! do not mind me, cried I, tell me only if there are any hopes of his life?"

" If you will wipe your eyes and compoſe yourſelf, replied he, I will tell you every thing, otherwiſe I am dumb. When I went from you, continued he, I found Mrs. Farnham with him endeavouring to prevail on him to take ſome broth which ſhe had in her hand; but, though to oblige her he attempted to taſte it, I perceived that he could not ſwallow a drop. I begged her, therefore, to keep it in readineſs, hoping that I ſhould ſoon call for it. He raiſed up his eyes to look on me, as if he wondered what I meant. When ſhe left us together, I chid him for concealing your name from me, and told him how I diſcovered that you was the lady on whoſe account he was ſo unhappy; adding all that you in-

intreated me to ſay to him: but to tell you what effect my intelligence had upon him, is impoſſible. It ſo far overpowered him, that he was actually unable to ſpeak for ſome time; and when he could, only vented his full heart in exclamations. He graſped my hand in his, and cried, "Are you ſure you are not miſtaken, my friend? Can ſhe be ſo kind? Do not, oh! do not deceive me! Yet why ſhould I queſtion your veracity? She was ever, ſhe muſt be always good; but, with a burſting ſigh, continued he, I have no right to expect ſuch condeſcenſion. Yet, may not this be a feint of your's? I know the goodneſs of your diſpoſition, Balchen: you wiſh, perhaps, to deceive me into life: but it will not do, if Miſs Wheatly has given her heart to another. I wiſh her eternal felicity, but I wiſh not to live without her."

" By all that's ſacred, ſaid I, ſhe has no heart but for you: ſhe will never give it to another. Could you but ſee the grief which ſhe now feels at your illneſs, you would think her a more pitiable object than yourſelf: for her ſake, therefore, endeavour to rouze yourſelf, and let me make her happy, by telling her that I left you better, and that I ſaw you take ſome nouriſhment."

He ſmiled faintly on me, and ſhook his head: but after I had related every little circumſtance concerning the manner in which you received the news of his ſituation, over and over, and informed him how much dejected with grief I left you, he began to believe me. He preſſed my hand, he begged me to come to you directly, to thank you a thouſand times for the concern you have ſhewn for his recovery, and to aſſure you that it depends entirely on

on the continuance of that goodneſs to him. By degrees, I brought him to be more compoſed; and before I left him, to be perfectly aſſured of your tenderneſs. I then called for his broth. Before he had drank it the doctor came in, and ſaid that he diſcovered many favourable ſymptoms, but that his ſpirits were too much agitated. He ſat by him till he grew more calm. When he was gone, I roſe up in order to come to you. Wentworth called me back, and charged me to conjure you, if you had the leaſt eſteem for him, not to afflict yourſelf on his account, but to preſerve your health and peace of mind, which was now, he ſaid, far dearer to him than his own.

"And now, Miſs Wheatly, will you not be ſatisfied with what I have done?"

"I am

" I am, ſaid I, and pay my moſt grateful acknowledgments to you, for your kind care of your amiable friend. May Heaven reſtore him to us! But why, Sir Edward, why did he ſuſpect me of having changed? Heaven is my witneſs, I never beſtowed a thought on any man but him: nor can I ever."

" What you ſay is, I feel, but too true, replied Sir Edward; for ſince you muſt know it, Wentworth's jealouſy of me aroſe from my having been lately a good deal ſeen with you in public."

" Jealous of you, Sir Edward, exclaimed I, all-aſtoniſhed!"

" Yes, Madam, he well knew my ſentiments: the extreme admiration which I expreſſed for you, and the tender ſenſations which I could

could not help feeling, as I grew more acquainted with your amiable diſpoſition. I may as well make a free confeſſion, though I ſee there is no hope for me. I cannot conceal my love any longer; but that love, exceſſive as it is, ſhall give no offence; it ſhall be converted into a ſincere friendſhip, which will make me as ſtudious to promote Wentworth's happineſs, as if it was my own, and merely becauſe I now know how very dear he is to you."

I was a little diſconcerted at this diſcovery of Sir Edward's; but when I recovered myſelf, I told him, as he himſelf muſt be ſenſible that I had rather repreſſed than encouraged every indication of an attachment to me, in him, I could not but wonder how his friend came to imagine that I was pleaſed with it.

" You muſt make great allowances, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, for

the extreme violence of the tender paſſions, eſpecially in a heart ſo delicate as Wentworth's, who has placed all his felicity in having that paſſion returned. Who would not wiſh to be eſteemed by one ſo lovely in her perſon, and with ſuch an amiable mind? But, deſirable as you are, in my eyes in the greateſt degree, if I had imagined that my attention to you would have given Wentworth the ſlighteſt pain, I would have checked my inclination, whatever uneaſineſs I felt by an oppoſition to it. I ſhould then have prevented, perhaps, his illneſs: of this I am ſure, I ſhall not enjoy any reſt till he is reſtored to you."

Though I was pleaſed with Sir Edward's friendly expreſſions in favour of him, I could not help blaming myſelf extremely for having, innocently indeed, and moſt undeſignedly, been the occaſion of ſo dan-

dangerous a diſorder: I wept till I could ſcarce ſee, while I reflected upon it: Sir Edward diſcovered great anxiety at ſeeing me perſiſt in giving way thus to ſelf-reproaches, which he over and over aſſured me I did not deſerve: and told me, peremptorily at laſt, that if I would not endeavour to make myſelf eaſy, and rely upon his care, he would trouble himſelf no more about us.

This threat brought me a little to myſelf. Longing to make my poor ſuffering Wentworth ſome amends for the vexation which I had cauſed, I fetched the drawing which he had made of me, and given up to me, in order to purchaſe his pardon. I incloſed it in a piece of paper, ſealed it, and deſired Sir Edward to convey it to him. "Tell him, ſaid I, that I lend it him to amuſe him till he recovers; but tell him alſo, that if he will not believe

me to be for ever his, if he will not take proper methods ſpeedily for the eſtabliſhment of his health, I will ſend for it back again directly."

Sir Edward ſhook his head at me, and ſaid, with a ſmile, that "I was a great threatener, but that he was very certain I had not power to make my words good." He then left me, to return to his friend.

Thus you ſee, my dear, how entirely incapable I am to leave London. Juſt now I have ſo many terrors, that till I hear Wentworth is quite reſtored I can think of nothing. If he ſhould not recover — you will but a very little time enjoy, though you ſhall enjoy it to the laſt moment of her exiſtence, the friendſhip of

Your ever affectionate,

L. W.

P. S. Pray

P. S. Pray make my excuſes, in the beſt manner you can, to your good father. Accept, both of you, my ſincere wiſhes for your happineſs.

LETTER XLVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

I WRITE this, my deareſt Annabell, without wiſhing for a letter from you, becauſe I think my laſt muſt have given you great uneaſineſs, as I am convinced of your real friendſhip for me, of which I flatter myſelf I ſhall not be deprived, even by Mr. Wilſon, dear as he ought to be to you.

I know not whether I ſhall addreſs this letter properly to you, for during the confuſion into which I

was thrown the morning I received your's, I ſomehow miſlaid your kind letter, and cannot find it: but if the name of Grierſon is no more, the dear, beloved Annabell ſtill remains, and will ever, I hope, to contribute to the felicity of her affectionate Lucy. However, ſhould the former be quite laid aſide, the remembrance of it is too freſh in the country to fill me with any apprehenſions about the delivery of this letter to you.

My dear Wentworth is better. Sir Edward has acted the part of a real friend. When he carried the drawing to him, he ſpent the remainder of the day with him, and ſat up that night in his room. The next morning, after he had heard the phyſician's opinion, he came to me, and told me, that he hoped I would not afflict myſelf any more about Wentworth's illneſs, as he was out of danger. "You have it entirely in your power, ſaid

ſaid he ſmiling, to kill or cure, and I hope you will make a good uſe of it." I made him lay aſide his raillery, and ſoon found that he had aſſiſted Mrs. Farnham in nurſing his friend that night: he had not indeed ſtaid to change his dreſs: his linen was tumbled, and his hair in diſorder. He made ſome apologies for his appearance, "but I thought, ſaid he, that you would rather ſee me dirty, than wait till I was dreſſed." I thanked him for his early viſit, and for his kind attendance upon Wentworth. "Why, ſaid he, I had two motives for ſo doing: I was deſirous of being myſelf a judge of the progreſs which he made in his recovery, which I had reaſon to believe was at hand, and I was not willing to bring you an imperfect or doubtful account of it. But I know now you are very impatient to hear how he received the little picture which you ſent to him. It is al-

moſt impoſſible to tell you how: it gave him ſo much joy, that I was afraid it would fruſtrate our deſign, and throw him quite back again. Too weak, and poſſeſt of far too great ſenſibility to ſupport the violent emotions with which he was ſeized at the firſt ſight of your reſemblance, and upon hearing your kind meſſage, he ſunk down upon his pillow, nearly ſenſeleſs, and let it fall out of his hand. You may be ſure that I buſied myſelf more in trying to recover his ſpirits, than in taking up the drawing: but he would not take any thing till I had re-delivered it to him, and till he had ſecured it in his boſom. You would have actually laughed heartily to have ſeen us both, in ſpite of your concern, like a couple of great boys, ſtriving who ſhould firſt kiſs your picture. I ſwore that I had a right to demand a kiſs, as I had brought it, and was originally the cauſe of being

being brought. He proteſted that no mortal ſhould touch it but himſelf. You cannot imagine, Miſs Wheatly, what extreme pleaſure there is in innocent foolery, eſpecially when ſuch a face as your's is the occaſion of it."

Sir Edward told me, I believe, all this merely to divert me, and to make me believe that Wentworth's mind was tolerably at eaſe: I could not, indeed, help ſmiling at his manner of relating things, which is always very droll; yet I interrupted him by an exclamation of ſorrow at Wentworth's weakneſs, and told him that he ſhould not have given the picture to him ſo abruptly, but have diſcovered it to him by degrees.

"Why there now, ſaid he, you are not ſatisfied with my care, I ſee plainly; and yet I am the very beſt

nurſe in England. Oh! Miſs Wheatly, how glad you would be to attend on him yourſelf, at this intereſting juncture, if the cuſtom of the world would authorize ſuch a proceeding. I ſwear, however, that I don't believe he would get well half ſo ſoon under your care, as he will under mine: your anxiety and your tenderneſs would defeat your good intentions."

Perhaps they would, replied I, bluſhing prodigiouſly at his having read my thoughts. When our ſpirits are fluttered, we certainly are not ſo able to acquit ourſelves properly, as we are at another time, and are therefore particularly unfit to be about ſuch people.

"You agree then to my obſervation, cried he; but do only confeſs that you wiſh to be with him, for that is the truth of the matter.

You

You may deny it as much as you pleaſe, but you have a pair of honeſt eyes, which freely and plainly ſpeak the dictates of your heart. Nay, Miſs Wheatly, continued he, ſeeing me look down, quite abaſhed at his penetration, you ought to confeſs it to me, if I can bear to hear it, for I will venture to ſay that there are few men ſo extremely attached to you as I am, and who could deſire to be witneſs of your love for another; nor could I for any man but Wentworth. I know but too well the ineſtimable value of the ſacrifice which I make to him, but I know, at the ſame time, that by ſuch a ſacrifice alone I can render myſelf, in any ſhape, deſerving of the friendſhip of the only woman in the world whom I have yet been capable of loving."

I made no reply to this compliment, but an acknowledging bow. He went on thus:

" Before

" Before I leave you, I muſt inform you, that he begged me to thank you, in the tendereſt, moſt reſpectful terms, for your dear reſemblance, and to aſſure you, that to merit this kind indulgence, he would avail himſelf of your moſt dear and valuable promiſe to be for ever his, by taking all poſſible care of his health, about which, he ſaid, he ſhould have been quite indifferent, had he not been animated with the freſh hopes which he had ventured to entertain. But I have not done him juſtice, I am afraid: I am not clever in delivering thoſe tender meſſages: you have abſolutely ſpoiled me for a lover, Miſs Wheatly."

With theſe words he ran off, and left me to my own reflections, which were more ſatisfactory than they had been for ſome time, as I now began to flatter myſelf that Went-

Wentworth would recover. But why need Sir Edward, with his penetrating eyes, be ſo very obſerving? Yet it does not much ſignify; if he only makes uſe of his obſervations to promote my Wentworth's happineſs, and forward his recovery, I ſhall forgive him.

I expect a chiding letter from my Annabell, in anſwer to theſe my two laſt letters: but ſay or do what you will, you can never make any alteration in the ſentiments of

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

LETTER XLVII.

Mrs. WILSON to Miſs WHEATLY.

YOUR laſt letter but one, my deareſt friend, would have been ſooner anſwered, had not the change in my ſituation, and the family viſits in conſequence of it, which I have received and returned, prevented me from writing till now. Yet no change can make me inſenſible to the uneaſineſs of my Lucy. I have, believe me my dear, pitied you from my heart; and both Mr. Wilſon and myſelf have been under the greateſt anxiety for Mr. Wentworth's recovery. If our marriage had not been ſo near, nothing would have hindered Mr. Wilſon from coming to ſee if he could be of any ſervice to his worthy friend. He wrote immediately to him, however, upon that account: we are both heartily rejoiced that he is ſo much better.

I don't

I don't know what to ſay to you, my dear: you tell me that I ſhall chide, but indeed I cannot. I know very well what it is to love: and if Mr. Wentworth was in a ſituation to demand you properly, I ſhould be the firſt to applaud your choice. I commend you highly for not going to ſee him during his illneſs: on many accounts, I think your going to ſee him would have been indiſcreet. Yet had he, when given over earneſtly, requeſted your company, could you have refuſed it, my dear? I am afraid not. May your tenderneſs never be ſo ſeverely tried! I don't diſlike your Sir Edward; he is odd, but he has ſhewn a noble, diſintereſted friendſhip for you both: I wiſh you had known him before Wentworth, you might then have loved him, and have been, ere now, happy. Forgive me for breathing

this wiſh, my deareſt Miſs Wheatly, it proceeds from my great affection for you, and from my being thoroughly ſenſible of your merit.

I thank you for all your kind wiſhes for me, my friend; they are all granted: Mr. Wilſon is all I can deſire, and I have the pleaſure to ſee my dear father and my good grandmother as perfectly contented with him as myſelf.

The minute detail of a country-wedding, though it might formerly have amuſed you, cannot now be pleaſing, as your head and heart are ſo much engaged. I ſhall therefore ſuppreſs it; beſides, I really have not leiſure juſt now to be very particular. Mr. Wilſon inſiſts upon my making him known to you by letter, till he can have the pleaſure of paying his reſpects perſonally to you his reſpectful compliments

I there-

I therefore add to my aſſurances of being ever

Your moſt affectionate

A. W.

LETTER XLVIII.

Miſs WHEATLY to Mrs. WILSON.

JOY to you, my friend, my ſtill beloved Annabell, my dear Mrs. Wilſon! May you ever be happy in the choice of your heart; a choice, confirmed and approved of by your worthy parents, whom you have been bleſſed with, the kind, the proper directors of your youthful years; yet all, whoſe parents Providence has ſpared, are not happy: poor Harriet Blonden is a melancholy inſtance of the contrary: ſhe was carried home to her mother in a ſtate

a ſtate of abſolute deſpair: forced to exchange the ſpacious, elegant apartments to which ſhe had been accuſtomed for ſome time, for the few, confined, ill-furniſhed rooms of a lodging, in a little, dirty, narrow ſtreet: forced to quit the dazzling blaze of well-lighted apartments, crowded with well-dreſſed company, in whoſe unmeaning looks, and more unmeaning converſation, this poor miſtaken girl, (miſtaken certainly in her notions of happineſs) placed her ſole felicity, for a place ſcarce bigger than a cloſet; where, by the light of a ſmall candle, ſhe muſt ſit and liſten to her poor, heart-pierced mother's melancholy reflexions. Think not, my dear, that I have thus drawn her different ſituations, in order to make the latter appear to the greater diſadvantage: I ſhould, myſelf, prefer the meaneſt ſituation in life, if bleſt with innocence and peace,

to

to the falſe appearance which ſhe made in her ſhowy one, to which ſhe is indebted for the ſorrow and diſappointment ſhe at preſent, no doubt, very acutely feels. If ſhe had never had an opportunity of raiſing her expectations, ſhe might now have been happy. Young women with ſmall, and with no fortunes, ſhould carefully avoid the company of men above them, in every thing but the only thing in which they ought to be ſuperior to them; that is, in their inclinations and their power to protect them; both which they make ſubſervient to the meaneſt purpoſes, making no ſcruple to gratify the firſt at the expence of the happineſs of the object which raiſed it, and ſhamefully abuſing the laſt by employing it in the ſervice of wickedneſs.

You cannot imagine how much I feel for this unhappy girl; but I am drawn

drawn off from purſuing theſe diſagreeable reflections, which I could not baniſh from my mind, on her moſt uncomfortable ſituation, by Sir Edward. He has brought a thouſand tender ſpeeches to me from Wentworth. I hope they are not of his own making; they could not, I think, be invented by him; for when he ſaw that they affected me, he ſtopped. He alſo communicated the agreeable intelligence, that his phyſician had given him leave to take an airing; and that he even inſiſted upon his going a little way out of town for a while; but that Wentworth's obſtinate refuſal made him give up that point, provided he would promiſe to viſit every morning Kenſington-Gardens till he was well. "So I am to conduct him thither to-morrow, ſaid he, and now do not you want a little air too?" added he, archly.

I bluſhed,

I bluſhed, I looked down, but I made no reply.

" Ay, I thought I was right, ſaid he ſmiling, but we muſt go for all that: one look at you will do more good than all the preſcriptions of his phyſicians."

I own, my dear, I wiſhed to ſee him; and when we wiſh for a thing we are generally fruitful in expedients to obtain it. " Why, replied I, juſt lifting up my eyes to him, if my uncle will take me in his chariot to-morrow—"

" Excellent! cried Sir Edward an admirable thought! Women always outdo us at expedients; we are but mere blunderers in theſe matters, after all."

" But do not give Wentworth any hint of this, ſaid I, becauſe I would

would not willingly make him endure the pains of expectation, as I cannot be certain of my uncle's going with me."

"How tender, how conſiderate you are, Miſs Wheatley, replied he: no other man can deſerve you; Wentworth truly does; for his heart is as excellent as your own. Did you but hear him pour out his ſoul as I do, you would love him a thouſand times more affectionately, and your love for him now is enough to content any reaſonable man; but lovers are apt to be very unreaſonable people."

I ſighed, I bluſhed, I was pleaſed; but the pleaſure which I felt was not without allay, for I was afraid to give a looſe to it; and though I moſt ſincerely rejoiced to hear of theſe proofs of Wentworth's love, I wanted to give a different turn to the

the converſation : in order to do it, I aſked after Lady Julia, whom I had not ſeen ſince his illneſs. " She will, I believe, be here, ſaid Sir Edward, by and by ; but take care not to mention Wentworth to her."

Here was, I thought, my dear, a fine opening for me to enquire about what I had long deſired to know : I therefore eagerly demanded the reaſon of that injunction.

" He alone, ſaid Sir Edward, muſt inform you of that. The Earl has been much concerned at his illneſs, and ſent twice a day till he mended : but I muſt now bid you adieu. Make Mr. Mordaunt bring you to-morrow, if you can ; or why cannot Mrs. Mordaunt do ſuch a friendly office ?"

" Becauſe, ſaid I, it will give me more ſatisfaction to have my uncle

uncle witneſs of the propriety of my conduct than my aunt."

" Your conduct is ſo unblameable, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, that they muſt be ſtrange people indeed who can find any fault with you."

He had but juſt left me when Lady Julia came in. As her converſation is always more polite than entertaining, nothing very lively paſſed between us. She appeared, I thought, uncommonly ſerious; but I took no notice of her being ſo, merely becauſe my head was full of other things. At laſt, as if weary of my ſilence on a ſubject, which plainly too much engroſſed her attention, " Mr. Wentworth has been dangerouſly ill, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid ſhe." " So Sir Edward tells me, Lady Julia," replied I, with a ſudden glow on my face, which I could have

have wiſhed to have concealed, "but I am glad he is better."

"Yes, he is better, but he is very weak and low ſtill; and it is thought that it will be ſome time before he can recover his ſtrength."

I ſighed, in my turn, at this; and then an odd thought occurred, that I vented, by aſking her ladyſhip if ſhe had ſeen him.

"Oh! no, ſaid ſhe, he has not been abroad yet; but my father called on him, and tells me that he is very much altered."

A ſecond ſigh eſcaped me, when my aunt came in with ſome ladies of our common acquaintance, and the converſation became general.

In the evening, I found an opportunity to ſpeak with my uncle

alone; I aſked him to take me to Kenſington-Gardens the next morning, and plainly told him my reaſons for that requeſt.

He pauſed a little, and ſaid that he had an appointment in St. James's ſtreet at eleven; but added, that if I would call on him about twelve, he would go with me, as he had rather go from thence than from home.

You may be ſure that I did not make him wait. As ſoon as we arrived at the walk Sir Edward mentioned, I ſaw him at no great diſtance, ſupporting my poor Wentworth, who endeavoured to haſten his ſteps towards me; but I would not permit him to do ſo. I ran, I flew to meet him, and, giving him my hand, told him that I was extremely glad to ſee him abroad again, though at the ſame time my

eyes

eyes were full of tears, to ſee him look ſo pale and thin.

The pleaſure of meeting me, and of ſeeing the various emotions that I felt, which were, without doubt, ſtrongly pictured in my countenance, affected him ſo much that he could ſcarce ſtand. I aſſiſted Sir Edward in leading him to a ſeat; and when he ſat down, that kind friend took my uncle by the arm, and led him into another walk. I cannot pretend to tell you what we ſaid to each other, upon our firſt meeting: love and joy had almoſt chained up Wentworth's tongue, and mine was, for ſome time, not more at liberty; but our eyes, the faithful interpreters of our thoughts, ſpoke for us. He firſt interrupted this eloquent ſilence, by pouring forth the effuſions of his heart in the moſt fervent acknowledgements for my condeſcending goodneſs to

him, and moſt pathetically complained of his inability to make the return he wiſhed. He was ſo tenderly touched, that I, who trembled for his health, begged him to think no more about me, if it gave him ſo much concern, and attempted to turn the converſation to a more lively ſubject, that I might thereby chear his drooping ſpirits, and hinder him from dwelling too long on that which was, I perceived, ſo painful to him; but I did not ſucceed in my attempt; for my very intention to turn the converſation diſcovered, he ſaid, ſo great an eſteem for him, that it heightened, if poſſible, his paſſion for me, and made him adore me more than ever. He expreſſed his ſenſe of the ſorrow which I had ſhewn for his illneſs, and of my infinite kindneſs in ſending his little drawing to him, in the moſt rapturous terms; but this interview, he

he added, as it was what he had not ventured to expect, was delightful to him beyond expreſſion, and had reſtored him to life. "But when I begin to reflect, Miſs Wheatly, continued he, preſſing my hand tenderly, how poor a return I can at preſent make to this extreme goodneſs of yours, my heart dies within me, ſo exquiſite is my regret: yet I am a little more at liberty than I was: I am permitted to give you all the information in my power relating to myſelf, from giving which I was, till yeſterday, ſtrictly prohibited. But ſtill, ſtill, how very unſatisfactory will that be to you, continued he, with a viſible impatience.

"You don't know that, cried I, at leaſt I wiſh to hear your ſtory."

"Oh! that I could gratify every wiſh, replied he, of that dear, generous

heart as readily." But I muſt break off here; I will return to my ſubject in my next. I remain, my dear,

Yours, moſt affectionately,

L. W.

LETTER XLIX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MR. Wentworth then proceeded in the following manner:

"I have been told by Mr. Farnham, who had the care of me from my birth, that Lord G——m, while abroad with his father, who reſided there for ſome time in a public character, had taken ſuch an inclination to a young lady of very high birth, that it was with the utmoſt difficulty he was prevented from marrying her. The only objection to

to their union was her religion, for ſhe was a Roman Catholic, though of an Engliſh family. His parents, however, ſeeing how much his heart was ſet on the match, would have agreed to it, provided her father would have only conſented to let the children be brought up Proteſtants: he would on no account liſten to that propoſal, and to prevent any farther overtures of the ſame kind, ſhut up his daughter in a convent, but not till it was too late; for ſhe was pregnant on her admiſſion as a probationer. But as her relations were not half ſo much ſcandalized at this crime, as at the bare mention of her changing her religion, they allowed her money ſufficient, with which ſhe bribed ſome of the lay-ſiſters belonging to the convent to deliver a letter to her lover, and to prepare him to receive the child that ſhe expected to bring into the world, which was

all the return it was then in her power to make for his conſtant attachment to her, as he had always expreſſed the greateſt horror at her being ſo cruelly impriſoned, and the utmoſt anxiety about his child. That child, whom you ſee before you, (for I am the ſon of this unfortunate lady) was delivered to my father and his ſervant, who waited to receive me at the garden-gate of the convent; and as ſoon as my father had put me into the arms of a nurſe, who was ready waiting to receive me in a poſt-chaiſe, they made the beſt of their way to the next ſea-port town, where I and my nurſe were conſigned to the care of Mr. Farnham, and by him conducted ſafe to England. I was educated in the moſt liberal manner by him, but kept ignorant of my real birth, having always paſſed for the ſon of one of Mr. Farnham's particular friends.

friends. My father never choſe to own me, even after my unhappy mother and her relations were no more, till his own father died a few months ago. Lord G——m is now abroad in a public ſtation; but before he went, he, unknown to me, propoſed a match between me and the Earl of ——'s daughter, Lady Julia C——, to which the latter made no objection, as I was no ſtranger to him, and as it was in my father's power to give me a very large fortune, as he never was married, and has no other child to provide for. But of theſe his intentions I have only been informed ſince my firſt acquaintance with you at the abbey; and then only received his orders, through Mr. Farnham, to prepare myſelf to wait upon that lady as ſoon as he returned to England, when he would make himſelf known to me, and preſent me in form.

" You remember, Miſs Wheatly, that ſoon after I had the happineſs of ſeeing you in town, I went down to D——ſhire, and introduced myſelf to your friend, Miſs Grierſon and her family. You, doubtleſs, thought my proceeding odd; it muſt have appeared ſo, I allow; but this was my reaſon for it: At our firſt meeting, at the abbey, Mr. Farnham, who was, I ſuppoſe, ordered to be very attentive to me, ſoon ſaw the deep impreſſion which you had made on my heart, and therefore hurried me away from a place where I could have dwelt for ever. He ſaid, indeed, but little on the occaſion; but I found that he watched me narrowly, and was not ignorant of my ſecond meeting with you at the play. Soon afterwards he took me pretty freely to taſk, and told me that I muſt not form expectations *there*, as my father would

would ſoon be in England, and had deſigned me for Lady Julia, and had therefore given him ſtrict orders to forbid my ſeeing you again. I urged all I could think of to move him to prevail on my father to ſuffer me to encourage an inclination, of which I was ſure he would approve, when he knew the lovely object of it; but in vain: my father, he ſaid, could no way retract his promiſe to the Earl; and added, that I muſt prepare to follow *his* directions.

"How ſhall I deſcribe the indignation which I felt, Miſs Wheatly, when he told me, that I was both a raſh and a weak young man, to perſiſt in following a woman who was, for aught I knew, very undeſerving of me; and that I muſt no longer viſit at Mr. Mordaunt's. I was provoked to the laſt degree: without any ſubſiſtence, however, but what I received through *his* hands,

hands, ſtill ignorant who and where my father was, what could I do? Deprived of the dear, the inchanting pleaſure of ſeeing you, I took the only method I had left of eaſing my mind, and confuting the injurious opinion he had conceived of you. By going down to your eſtate, and by being there, I ſhould, I knew, enjoy the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of hearing of you continually, the only ſatisfaction I could enjoy while abſent from you. On finding that you were ſo much beloved, ſo much adored there, I could ſcarce, though I endeavoured to do it, conceal my paſſion from your friend. I returned then to town more enamoured with your excellent character, if poſſible than I was before with your lovely ſelf; but I was yet afraid of appearing the lover, till I was more in my own power. I was even capable, you know, Miſs Wheatly, of

of ſtaying from you ſome days after I returned to town; but I was not idle: with my whole ſoul full of you, I was endeavouring to ſoften Mr. Farnham in my favour, but in vain. In order, I ſuppoſe, to frighten me thoroughly, he told me one morning, that ſince I perſiſted to engage myſelf with a woman whom my father would never approve, he had orders to withold my allowance till I returned to my reaſon and my duty. This threat occaſioned the viſit which I made to you, to bid you farewel. Determined to give up my life, rather than my love, which increaſed every moment, I thought of entering into the ſervice of the Eaſt India Company as a volunteer; but I could not prevail on myſelf to quit England without taking leave of you. I need not mention the dear, generous compaſſion you diſcovered. I can never forget

it

it. From that time I conceived hopes that I was not altogether your averſion. I left you, almoſt diſtracted, for having drawn a tear from you on my account.

"As the ſhip was juſt ready to ſail, I prepared to go on board, but was ſtopped by Mr. Farnham, who came in ſearch of me, and appeared like a man bereft of his ſenſes, leſt I ſhould have eſcaped him. He obliged me to go home with him; aſked me if I was determined to break my father's heart, and tried by every ſoothing method, to wean my affections from you. However, when he found that he talked to no purpoſe, he left me to myſelf, and went, for a ſhort time, to France. You know what followed, Miſs Wheatly, till I was ſeized with the illneſs from which I am now ſlowly recovering, which occaſioned, I imagine, Mr. Farham's

Farnham's haſty return. His terror and ſurprize, at ſeeing me in ſo weak a condition, were very apparent: not being acquainted with the real cauſe of it, he concluded that it in a great meaſure proceeded from my father's having forbidden me to inform you of my real ſituation: and his concluſions were partly juſt, as my extreme regard for you made me moſt earneſtly deſire to communicate every thing to you. As he thought in this manner, he told me that I was at liberty to reveal the reaſon why I could not make my addreſſes to you.

"Though this permiſſion was a mortifying one, I was reſolved to avail myſelf of it, that you might not have the leaſt room to accuſe me of concealing any thing. Give me leave, now, to reaſſure you that to you alone ſhall the remainder of my

my days be devoted. By all that's ſolemn I ſwear that I will never marry any other woman: and tho', while I am in this dependant ſtate, without a fortune to offer, I neither can expect nor deſire you to accept of me, I muſt, nevertheleſs, love you to the laſt moment of my life. With impatience I wait for the arrival of my father, to tell him that nothing upon earth can change my ſentiments."

Here he ſtopped. He had ſo much exhauſted his ſpirits in this narration, which was very long for a perſon juſt riſen from a ſick bed, that I trembled for fear he ſhould relapſe. I begged him to reſt a little, in order to compoſe himſelf.

Theſe marks of my attention to his health almoſt intoxicated him with pleaſure. He gazed at me with eyes lan-

languiſhing with the moſt expreſſive affection: and when I would not let him ſpeak, leſt he ſhould be thereby fatigued, he preſſed my hand to his boſom, while his heart throbbed as if it would come forth to thank me. I ſmiled on him, and told him that he muſt now have patience, and liſten to me. I then thanked him for ſervices to Mr. Wilſon, informed him of Sir George's attempt upon Amy, and ſpoke of his letter to him in the terms which, I thought, it merited. He ſeemed ſurprized, but pleaſed that I knew all he had done, and approved of it. Yet when I pauſed, he caſt a look in which were blended timidity and doubt, and ſaid, with a ſmall heſitation and a gentle ſigh, " You mention nothing about Sir Edw. Blanchen, Miſs Wheatly."

" What can I ſay of him, Mr. Wentworth, replied I, but that he has

has been a kind friend to us both, and has taken every ſtep in his power to repair the injury of which he was the innocent cauſe."

This was, I thought, the leaſt I could ſay about Sir Edward, but it was, I found, a great deal too much: it made Wentworth fetch a deep ſigh: he was confuſed; he trembled, and looked uneaſy; his eyes became more penetrating than uſual, while with a faint voice he ſaid, "Sir Edward Balchen is very amiable; and he has, undoubtedly, a very fine perſon."

He pauſed here. I ſaw the driſt of his ſpeech in a moment: "Ah, cried I, lifting up my eyes to him with a ſmile, do yourſelf the juſtice to believe, that ſhe who has once loved Wentworth, will not leave him for Sir Edward Balchen. Can you eſteem

a woman

a woman as you ought, when you have no confidence in her? Jealouſy is ſo mean a paſſion, that I hope it will never be harboured in the breaſt of the man for whom I have ſhewn ſo much regard, drive it therefore inſtantly from your boſom. Learn to reſpect and eſteem Sir Edward, who has proved himſelf a real friend, and do not give me occaſion to ſay again, that I will never have any man but you."

Theſe words, I perceived, touched him. He was both aſhamed and ſorry for having dropped the ſlighteſt ſuſpicions about me, and diſcovered ſo much contrition for his offence, that I was afraid it would have had a fatal effect upon him, juſt at this critical time. To convince him, therefore, of my ſincerity, I entreated him to make himſelf entirely eaſy till he ſaw his father, and then to

omit

omit no circumſtance of affection or duty, to induce him not to force his inclination. But if all will not avail, added I, with a tenderneſs of expreſſion which I could not help diſcovering, let not the want of fortune be any objection, mine is, I truſt, ſufficient for us both: and I ſhall feel an inexpreſſible joy at having it in my power to beſtow it on the man who is ſo deſerving of my eſteem."

" Oh! Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, raiſing up his hands and eyes, full of admiration and aſtoniſhment, generous, amiable creature!—"

He could articulate no more. His voice was far too weak to expreſs what he felt. In attempting to thank me in the manner he wiſhed, he ſunk down, almoſt lifeleſs, at my feet. I lifted up his head, and laid it in

in my lap. He then ſeized both my hands, and devoured them with fervent kiſſes; but fearful leſt he ſhould be ſurprized in ſo tender an attitude (but I ſhould not have minded either Sir Edward or my Uncle) as ſoon as I found that his ſtrength returned, I made him ſenſible how neceſſary it was for him to reſume his ſeat. Ever attentive, ever ſollicitous to pleaſe me, he complied, juſt as Sir Edward and my uncle, who began, by this time, to be tired of the unuſual piece of complaiſance which he had ſhewn me, came up to us.

Wentworth, who was now become far leſs able to ſeparate himſelf from me than ever, aſked my leave, though with great ſubmiſſion, to call ſometimes to ſee me at my uncle's, promiſing not to abuſe ſo high a favour.

This

This requeſt, ſo modeſtly, ſo reſpectfully made, I had not power to refuſe: I therefore told him, ſmiling, that I ſhould depend upon his diſcretion.

He would lead me to the chariot, though Sir Edward bid him, with a laugh, be quiet, and told him that inſtead of giving aſſiſtance, he wanted to receive it; adding, that if I was ſtrong enough I ought to help him. He replied, with tranſport, that I had raiſed him from deſpair to life, to happineſs!

We then ſet off in different carriages. As Wentworth's paſſed, we looked once more at each other. I ſaw his head quite out to take a farewell glance.

Oh! my Annabell, how happy, how infinitely happy did theſe few hours

hours roll away! when will ſuch hours return? You will not be any longer afraid to truſt me with my Wentworth, will you, my dear Mrs. Wilſon? Has he any occaſion to marry a woman whom he cannot love, merely to oblige a father, who makes the firſt diſcovery of the parental character with an act of cruelty? Forced marriages are ſurely the moſt ſtriking proofs of parental tyrany. Nobody can be a warmer advocate for filial obedience than myſelf. Were my excellent mother now living, and inſiſted upon my not marrying, nay only deſired me not to marry Wentworth, much as I love him, I ſhould certainly obey her; but I ſhould not think myſelf obliged to unite myſelf to the man of her choice, if I was convinced that I could neither make myſelf nor him happy by ſo doing. I will not accept of Wentworth's hand in

mere

mere oppoſition to his father, while he protects him, and treats him like a ſon; but if Lord G—m throws off the parent, and refuſes to provide for him, only becauſe he rejects a woman whom he cannot love, then, I think, I may freely give him my fortune, as I have already given him my heart. Theſe are my preſent ſentiments, but your friendly opinion, upon ſubjects ſo very intereſting, will be moſt gratefully acknowledged by

Your moſt affectionate

L. W.

LET-

LETTER L.

From the ſame to the ſame.

NO anſwer yet, from my dear Mrs. Wilſon, to thoſe two letters, which were of ſuch an enormous length, that I really began, after I had folded them up, to believe that your patience would be quite exhauſted before you got to the end of them, and was in twenty minds whether I ſhould diſpatch them to you or not: but when I conſidered that your friendſhip for the writer would carry you through them, I purſued my firſt intentions.

My uncle has been rallying me moſt unmercifully, to day, becauſe I kept him ſuch a tedious while in Kenſington Gardens; he told me that he is quite tired of the office of a confident; and deſired that I would

order my lovers to come home to me for the future.

As my heart has been more at eaſe than it has been for ſome time, I ſuffered him to enjoy his laugh without interruption; when he became a little compoſed, I told him that he had not kept his word with Miſs Blonden, and deſired him to preſent her, as if from himſelf, with a trifle from my purſe.

Thou art a generous girl, Lucy, ſaid he, but keep your purſe for other occaſions. She will be provided for. You muſt know that I have been with Sir George and made a deviliſh buſtle: for ſhe is my wife's relation, and I could not, therefore, ſee her quite neglected: ſo, Sir George Ackland and I have compromiſed matters. There is, it ſeems, a young ſprig of divinity to whom he has promiſed a living; and he

he has agreed to toſs Harriet into the bargain.

I ſtarted, I abſolutely ſhuddered at the mention of this iniquitous ſcheme. "Good Heavens, Sir, cried I, what can have induced you to join with Sir George in deceiving an innocent young man, by obliging him to take a woman who, ſetting aſide her tender attachment to his patron, muſt be the moſt improper perſon in the world for the wife of a clergyman."

"Pſhaw! pſhaw! cried my uncle, what out-of-the-way notions thou haſt of propriety, child? What the devil ſignifies who has her heart when once ſhe is married. Let her huſband take care to ſecure that, if he can: as long as he gets the living, I'll warrant that he won't trouble himſelf about the woman tacked to it. She may make an excellent

parſon's wife, notwithſtanding her *faux-pas*. Theſe things happen every day, and there's no harm done."

I was altogether ſhocked at this farther diſcovery of Mr. Mordaunt's maxims; ſo much ſhocked that I could not recover myſelf ſo as to make a reply, before he was called out of the room, to a perſon who came to him upon buſineſs.

But only conſider, my Annabell, the extreme iniquity of this fine propoſal, as well as the wretchedneſs which muſt neceſſarily be entailed upon theſe two people. Harriet, who is paſſionately fond of high life, for the enjoyment of which ſhe has ſacrificed her honour and her peace, and who has no idea of exiſting but in a crowd, muſt, to be ſure, enjoy vaſt felicity in becoming the wife of a country rector, ſettled at

at a great diſtance from London, the centre of all her joys (with a man who muſt be, whether he is agreeable or not, diametrically oppoſite to Sir George) in a a ſmall pariſh, in which ſhe may not find a human creature, according to her notions of one, to converſe with. This is the external happineſs ſhe is to expect; and if ſhe ever ſeriouſly reflects upon her conduct, ſhe muſt feel the moſt uneaſy ſenſations, from a conſciouſneſs that ſhe is impoſing upon her huſband, and appearing to him as a virtuous woman. Nor can his ſituation be much more eligible, in having a wife forced upon him, whoſe affections are engaged to another, and whom he marries, with his own conſent, entirely from mercenary motives. I cannot check my indignation when I think that it is my dear mother's brother who is the principal agent in this vile

affair, for ſo I muſt call it, and ſhall look upon the ſacrifice of the perſon for intereſt, as the moſt infamous proſtitution. And yet, my dear, how many women are to this indebted for all their figure in life. Sorry am I to ſay ſo, but I fear that too many of our clergy, to the eternal ſcandal of ſuch patrons, have roſe in the church by proceedings of this kind only. While theſe practices are encouraged, who can wonder that religion and virtue are no longer thought eſſential to happineſs, and that the names are kept up merely to give a ſanction to all ſorts of vice.

I am tired of this odious ſubject. Pray take notice that my letter is already of a very decent length, though I have not mentioned a ſyllable about Wentworth. He is quite well and I am happy.

I am

I am going, for the firſt time, to Ranelagh, to night, with Lady Julia and my aunt. Sir Edward has dropped a hint, that I ſhall ſee Wentworth. Not one line yet from my Annabell! Return Mr. Wilſon's compliments, and tell him at the ſame time, that he and I ſhall never be upon good terms, if he will not give you time to write to

Your ſincerely affectionate

L. W.

LETTER LI.

Mrs. WILSON to Miſs WHEATLY.

THANKS to you, my deareſt friend; accept my beſt acknowledgments, and thoſe of Mr. Wilſon, for your moſt affectionate congratulations, above all, for your two long and entertaining letters, as well as for your Wentworth's narrative. I would chide you a little if I could, but he appears to be ſo ſincerely attached to you, diſcovers ſuch diſintereſted affection for you, and behaves ſo very unexceptionably in moſt points, that I don't know how to blame you.

Mr. Wilſon has already thought me ſevere, he ſays, in my lectures to you on this head: but believe me, what I ſaid was intended to promote your happineſs: you will therefore take it as it was meant.

We

We are both of opinion that Mr. Wentworth ought not to be obliged to marry a woman whom he cannot love, merely becauſe his father has formed ſuch an engagement for him without his acquieſcence. Nor can I think that Lord G—m, when he recollects how much he himſelf ſuffered by not being permitted to marry the woman of his choice, will attempt to force his ſon. Your advice to him, my dear, was good, and your offer noble; but you have only acted like yourſelf. You was ever ſo generouſly diſpoſed. May he, if he accepts of it, make you all the tender returns which you ſo well deſerve!

Yet I could wiſh, my deareſt Lucy, that Lord G—m may be ſo well pleaſed, both with you and your amiable Wentworth, as to give his free conſent to your union. Were he to ſearch round the world, he will

never meet with ſuch another wife for his ſon: and I think I may venture to affirm, that he will be of my opinion when you are become known to him.

I am entirely of your way of thinking, with regard to poor Miſs Blonden, whom I ſincerely pity: but as to Mr. Mordaunt, I am quite aſhamed of him. I am ſorry that my Lucy has ſuch an uncle. Thank Heaven, my dear, his principles cannot affect you.

I write this from High-Meadow, in G—ſhire, the ſeat of Mr. Wilſon's father; your letters are carefully forwarded to me here. I have been moſt affectionately received by this gentleman, and his ſiſter: they are both excellent characters, but their great deſire to give me all the pleaſure which the country affords, leaves me

me ſo little leiſure at preſent to write to my Miſs Wheatly, that I can only intreat her to continue me the favour of her's: when I return to the Grange, I will do my beſt to repay it. Mr. Wilſon will then, perhaps, ſee you in town; but I fancy I ſhall not have that happineſs. Write, therefore, my deareſt Lucy, as uſual, to your

Still faithful,

And ever affectionate,

A. W.

LETTER LII.

Miſs WHEATLY to Mrs. WILSON.

I Am afraid that you are a little idle, my deareſt Mrs. Wilſon, as well as ſo much engaged; but as you aſſure me that you are happy, I muſt be ſatisfied; ſince you will not ſend any longer letters, I muſt alſo be content, till you have more leiſure, or more inclination to write. I was at Ranelagh t'other night, a place which had been vaſtly cried up to me, and perhaps for that reaſon it did not anſwer my expectations. I was out of countenance at being ſtared at, and weary of the perpetual round. I acquainted you with my party. Sir Edward Balchen and Wentworth joined us. Nothing particular ought to have paſſed between the latter and myſelf. He has recovered his colour: he never looked

ſo

ſo well: he was elegantly dreſſed, and his eyes ſparkled with love and joy as he approached me. He paid great reſpect to Lady Julia, whom Sir Edward engaged in chat, to give Wentworth a moment to ſpeak to me. Sir Edward is certainly one of the beſt natured men in the world. I told Wentworth ſo: but in the manner I praiſed Sir Edward, he was not diſpleaſed with what I ſaid in his favour. "I truly eſteem Balchen, ſaid he to me, for the infinite regard I know he has for Miſs Wheatly."

As we paſſed on in the crowd, we met Sir George Ackland: he bowed, but did not ſtop; the ſight of him, however, quite diſconcerted me: I became terrified leſt he ſhould ſtill wiſh to ſhew reſentment againſt Wentworth. I turned pale, and was frighted to death.

Wentworth, ever attentive to the ſlighteſt movement in my countenance, preſſed my trembling hand, and aſked me if I was ill; and what had alarmed me?" "A thouſand fears for your ſafety, ſaid I, ſoftly." "Be under no concern," replied he, gaily, endeavouring to enliven me and to raiſe my drooping ſpirits, "there is no ſort of danger." Yet I could not but be apprehenſive, though Sir George left the place almoſt immediately. My fears remained ſo long upon me, that when Wentworth put me into the coach, they prompted me to aſk him if we ſhould ſet him down. "Yes, do Harry, let us, ſaid the friendly Sir Edward: we can ſit five very well. My aunt and Lady Julia added their intreaties to mine, though I am ſtill ignorant of their motives.

He ſtepped in after us, with a decent apology for crowding us. I was placed

placed out of mere neceſſity, for want of room, almoſt in his lap: and I believe he neither thought of Sir George nor any other living creature but myſelf. In the ſofteſt, tendereſt whiſpers he ſoothed my fears, and, unobſerved, preſſed me fondly to his boſom. Yet, though my ſituation was not altogether unpleaſing, I thought it too particular, and wiſhed to be releaſed from it. My wiſhes were ſoon gratified; for when he and Sir Edward had conducted my aunt and me into the houſe, they returned to the care of Lady Julia. But reſt was a ſtranger to my eyes that night; a thouſand confuſed ideas concerning Sir George and Wentworth, as often as I ſunk into a ſlumber, diſturbed me to ſuch a degree, that I roſe early, in hopes of diſperſing them.

It is impoſſible to expreſs the ſatisfaction which I felt on ſeeing Went-

Wentworth enter the room, after breakfaſt, with an agreeable ſmile upon his face, and a chearfulneſs in his manner, which diſſipated all my fears. The alteration of my behaviour, ſo much in his favour, has given him ſo ſpirited an air, and has thrown ſuch life into his countenance, that he is quite another man, and appears to more advantage than ever. But, though his deportment is more ſpirited, there is all that winning ſoftneſs in it which firſt caught my heart.

He made a ſort of an apology for availing himſelf ſo early of the permiſſion which I gave him to call on me now and then: "But if you will allow me to have any penetration, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, ſmiling tenderly on me, I could not help flattering myſelf that a viſit from me, this morning, would be agreeable to you."

Cer-

Certainly, ſaid I, it is not ill-timed, for you owe Mrs. Mordaunt a compliment for her civility to you laſt night.

" *A-pro-pos*, ſaid he, is ſhe at home?"

" Yes, replied I, going to touch the bell, I will ſend to let her know you are here."

" Stay one moment, ſaid he, ſpare me one moment to thank you for your fears laſt night. Yet I wiſh not to purchaſe even all the tranſport which your tenderneſs gave me, at the expence of a ſingle pang to that generous boſom."

I made him no reply, my Annabell, but with a look. I would not yet willingly encourage too frequent interviews of the tender kind, and therefore bade the ſervant tell his lady

lady that Mr. Wentworth was come to wait upon her.

He changed colour at my reſolution not to be left alone with him, and with a tender languor in his eyes, and a gentle ſigh, ſaid, "I hope, Miſs Wheatly, that I have not yet any way encroached upon the goodneſs which you have ſhewn me."

Believe me, my Annabell, I was hurt to ſee that I could ſo ſoon make him uneaſy: I did not intend, I am ſure, to make him ſo. I ſhould deſpiſe myſelf if I could willingly give pain to a heart that loves me. I made haſte to relieve the anxiety under which he viſibly laboured, by telling him, that far from diſapproving his conduct, I was very happy with his early viſit, but that I was ſure he would not think it improper to pay ſome civilities to Mrs. Mordaunt on her own account as well as on mine, as ſhe

ſhe was related to me. I concluded with telling him, that we muſt manage our interviews with great circumſpection, till the arrival of his father.

" Oh! that he were arrived, ſaid he, that I might be no longer in this cruel ſtate of ſuſpenſe!"

The coming in of my aunt interrupted this converſation, and we began to talk about Ranelagh, and the polite herd with which we had ſo lately mingled; but as Wentworth has no ſtronger inclination than myſelf to hear the faſhionable anecdotes, we made but a poor affair of it.

The entrance of Sir Edward mended matters not a little, though he has far too good an underſtanding to ſpend much of his time in this trifling manner; yet he has ſo happy

happy a talent for humour that the moſt inſignificant things, when he had dreſſed them up, are truly comic. He therefore very cleverly attacked my aunt, and gave the anxious, reſtleſs Wentworth an opportunity to ſpeak to me more than he could otherwiſe have done.

Confeſs, now, ſaid I to him, laughing, that this friend of ours is the moſt neceſſary man in the world. I hope he will not look out for a miſtreſs till we have no longer any occaſion for his aſſiſtance, and then I ſhall wiſh him all imaginable ſucceſs with ſome amiable woman who will, I think, deſerve him.

" He will not meet with ſuch a one in a hurry, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid Wentworth. You have made the whole ſex appear ſo little in his eyes that, till he meets with a Lady who has ſome qualities reſembling thoſe amiable

amiable ones of which you are poſſeſſed, and which he ſo juſtly admires, and as the chances are all againſt him, I believe we ſhall not ſoon loſe him for a friend.

As he perceived that I did not chuſe to indulge him with any farther private converſation, he, in compliance with my wiſhes, joined Sir Edward and my aunt, and I, to reward him for ſo doing, diſtinguiſhed him by every civility in my power. So that, I fancy, he left me as happy as he could be, conſidering the uncertainty of his ſituation.

I am very glad that you give me hopes of ſeeing Mr. Wilſon in town. I ſhall then expect to hear particulars relating to you, which want of leiſure has prevented you from tranſmitting to me. I excuſe, however, your ſilence, becauſe I know that your time is chiefly dedicated

to

to good Mrs. Mertins, as well as to your father.

Pray, are you ſtill to be divided between the two houſes? You have not even once mentioned where Mr. Wilſon's habitation is to be fixed: Not abſolutely in town, I ſuppoſe, by your not coming with him. But you are an idle girl, as I ſaid before, and tell me nothing. Do you know that I am in ſearch of a wife for our friendly Sir Edward? I had once thought of recommending Lady Julia herſelf to him; ſhe is beautiful, and ſhe is good. I communicated my deſign to Mr. Wentworth, but he tells me that Sir Edward does not think that ſhe is poſſeſſed of ſenſibility enough. I wiſh we may find that conjecture to be well grounded; but I give up all my pretenſions to penetration, if Wentworth has not made a deep impreſſion upon her little heart. I hope I am miſtaken,

for

for I would not be the cauſe of uneaſineſs to any perſon, eſpecially to a young lady who ſeems to be ſo very gentle and inoffenſive.

The arrival of Lord G—— will determine whether I am right or wrong, as it will determine the fate of

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

LETTER LIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

I Return you many thanks, my dear friend, for your very kind letter, and for your manner of conveying it to me. Mr. Wilſon's behaviour has been both polite and friendly, and his extreme deſire to ſhew his gratitude to Wentworth will not make him, you may be ſure, leſs welcome

to

to me. Once more I thank you for conveying your letter to me through his hands.

He went to Wentworth firſt, on purpoſe to give him an opportunity to employ him, by letting him know that he was coming to me directly.

Wentworth was delighted with this mark of his attention, and ſent a little note to me: the firſt he had ever ventured to write. Nor do I believe he would have attempted to open ſuch a correſpondence with me, if he had not thought that I could not well return his note, after I had received it from the hands of Mr. Wilſon.

Has not my Wentworth acted a little artfully in this affair? Too much ſo, I think, to be encouraged, I therefore ſent back no anſwer but a verbal one.

But

But to return to your huſband, my dear. He is really a pretty gentleman, and ſpeaks of you in terms which at once convince me that his affection for you is very great, and that you are entirely worthy of it. That you deſerve all his affection, is beyond all doubt; nor indeed is there the leaſt room to ſuſpect your poſſeſſion of it. The impatience which he ſhews to get back to D—ſhire ſufficiently proves the ſincerity of his attachment to you. He tells me that he is only come to town upon buſineſs; to look for a houſe, as it will be neceſſary for him to fix his abode in London during the winter. I heard this with regret, becauſe it will occaſion, I foreſee, a ſeparation between me and my deareſt Annabell. But to what purpoſe do I alarm myſelf? Who can tell in what ſituation I am to paſs my future days? My time has lately been ſpent in ſo much anxiety and diſturbance, that I wiſh,

I own, to return to the abbey, and to ſtay there for ever. But then, without my friend, my Annabell, and removed ſo far from Wentworth, the abbey would have no charms for me: London, in that caſe, with all its diſagreeable conſequences, would be more agreeable.

Oh! my dear Mrs. Wilſon, did your Lucy ever think that there would come a time when ſhe would wiſh to live at a diſtance from the dear place of her nativity, that happy ſpot where ſhe never knew ſorrow till ſhe loſt her amiable, her ever-to-be lamented mother; ſtill, ſtill is that diſtreſsful moment oft remembered with tears; and oft does the recollection of paſt happy ſcenes encreaſe my preſent diſquietude. May you, my deareſt friend, never know the anxiety which I, at this inſtant, feel; for though you have very valuable relations, who are deſervedly

dear

dear to you, and though you have all the reaſon in the world to expect to ſurvive them, yet you are now bleſſed in a faithful friend to ſupply the loſs of them, to alleviate your griefs, and to leſſen your cares, whilſt I am expoſed to the wide world. Oh! Annabell, the reflection too acutely pains me. I dare not review my ſituation: it will not bear to be reviewed.

I had laid down my pen for a day or two, deſigning to take it up again when I was better diſpoſed to pleaſe myſelf, and to amuſe you with it. A ſecond viſit from Mr. Wilſon, though I am very much inclined to write, prevents me from writing a great deal. You will not have any occaſion to complain of the abſence of your lover and your huſband, for he is both: and in making ſuch haſte in the diſpatch of the affairs which called him to town, ſhews how great his deſire is to ſee you again. I dare

not detain him therefore, my dear, leſt I ſhould incur your diſpleaſure, which, added to my other vexations, would afflict me extremely. He will not, indeed, be detained. He will hardly give me time to tell you that I inſiſt upon your writing more frequently. I have deſired HIM to exert the huſband a little in my favour, to

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

LETTER LIV.

From the ſame to the ſame.

IN my laſt, my dear friend, I talked of troubles and perplexities; but they are trifling to thoſe which I ſhall probably go through.

A very extraordinary affair happened a few days ago. A young man, who

who made not an ungenteel appearance, enquired for my uncle; and upon being admitted, would have made himſelf known to him as the ſon of my father's only brother, who was thought to have died in the Eaſt Indies, two and twenty years ago. If he is really the perſon he pretends to be, I ſhall no longer have any right or title to the abbey, nor any claim to the large eſtate round it, as it was entailed by my grandfather, and intended for the next male heir. To make my ſituation worſe, my father married immediately after the news of his nephew's deceaſe, believing that the eſtate was certainly *his*, and made little or no proviſion for younger children, deſigning to ſave ſufficient fortunes for them out of it. My mother's fortune alſo was very ſmall. My father married her entirely from inclination: ſhe could therefore have fewer expectations of any pecuniary advantages from this match, and was

indeed of too generous a diſpoſition to deſire any. Happy in each other's love, they were patterns of conjugal felicity. During *their* lives, as they had no child but me, who, upon the failure of a male heir, was to inherit every thing, my father had nothing to do, but to make a handſome ſettlement upon my mother, which was alſo to deſcend, at her death, with the eſtate. If therefore this young man is indiſputably my couſin, I muſt think of contracting my wiſhes, and of drawing my deſires into a very narrow circle. Heaven knows that I never found the joy in pomp and ſplendour, with which ſo many people are ſo highly elevated. The real comforts of life lie in a narrow compaſs; in a much narrower one than the generality of mankind imagine. I ſhall indeed ardently wiſh for the ſame power I had to do good, for which I think the poſſeſſion of riches is only deſirable.

My

My uncle, who ſays that there muſt be ſome great miſtake in all this, and that he has a certificate of the death of this relation, ſomewhere, which muſt be looked for when his lawyer comes to town, laughs and tells me, that my couſin has offered to marry me, and to give back my eſtate to me. But were not my heart, my word engaged to Wentworth—Oh! Wentworth! how you make me feel the loſs of fortune!—Were it not for that reflection, I might ſtill be happy; but that quite unhinges me.

Adieu, my Annabell? I am too ignorant of this affair at preſent, and too diſtracted with a number of indiſtinct ideas, to add any thing to what I have written. All I can ſay is, that no change of fortune ſhall ever make me ceaſe to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your truly affectionate

LETTER LV.

Mrs. WILSON to Miſs WHEATLY.

YOUR laſt letter, my dear Miſs Wheatly, has alarmed us prodigiouſly. You cannot, ſurely, be ſerious. I much fear that you are ill, or that your diſappointment has affected your ſpirits in an uncommon manner. A ſon of your uncle Wheatly's living? It cannot be. Every creature at the abbey, who is old enough, remembers the account of his death. He is certainly a vile impoſtor. I hope your uncle Mordaunt will be very careful. You are, indeed, my dear friend, in but indifferent hands, I fear. Yet do not deſpair. Truſt in Providence, my ſweet Lucy, who never forſakes the innocent and the virtuous.

I am almoſt out of breath at the thought of this ſcheme, for it muſt certainly

certainly be a ſcheme, and a violence, to trick you out of your fortune. But ſurely, my dear, there is, there can be no danger. Yet, my beloved friend, my deareſt Miſs Wheatly, do not let it be given up tamely. If we ſhould all be miſtaken, if there is no redreſs, call up all your fortitude, and come down immediately to the Grange. My father's, my grandmother's, Mrs. Wilſon's father's, his own, every habitation ſhall be thrown open to receive my deareſt, beſt-beloved Lucy. She will be warmly welcomed by all her old, and, I hope, ſtill valued friends, wherever ſhe chuſes to reſide: the happy place ſhall be alſo choſen by herſelf: ſhe may, if ſhe pleaſes, reſide with them all by turns, to vary the ſcene. By ſo doing ſhe will, moſt probably, enliven her ſpirits, and amuſe her mind.

I am too eager for a ſecond letter from you to lengthen this. I cannot

think of retarding the diſpatch of it. Let me only add Mr. Wilſon's ſincere wiſhes, joined with mine, for your happineſs, and his moſt earneſt deſire to ſee you here, with

Your more than ever affectionate,

A. W.

LETTER LVI.

From Miſs WAEATLY to Mrs. WILSON.

THE laſt letter I ſent to you, my dear, was rather hurried, but the information it contained was of the alarming kind. That information being by ſeveral circumſtances ſtrengthened, ſtaggered at laſt even my uncle, by whom, as he is not, with his other virtues, gifted with retention, it was ſoon ſpread all over the town.

While

While this very diſagreeable intelligence was circulating, I endeavoured to compoſe my mind, which was, at firſt, undoubtedly, not a little diſturbed by it; for I do not pretend to be ſo ſtoical as to tell you that I bore, abſolutely unmoved, the loſs of my fortune, eſpecially when I had aſſured Wentworth that he ſhould ſhare it with me. There, I own, I felt the ſevereſt pang: and it was with no ſmall difficulty that I could bring myſelf to give up the romantic views which I had formed of this nature.

While I was ſitting in my dreſſing-room, leaning my head upon my hand, and almoſt loſt in a variety of reflections on the diverſity of new ſcenes, which would, in all human probability, open upon me, in conſequence of this ſurpriſing change in my affairs, I was rouzed from my contemplative attitude, by the appearance of Wentworth.

Wentworth. I ſtarted—I expected, yet dreaded, I don't know why, this interview. As for him, his whole deportment was ſerious, tender, and collected. He ſat down by me, and looking at me with unuſual fondneſs, preſſing my hand in his, ſaid, I have but juſt this moment heard, Miſs Wheatly, of what muſt, I am ſenſible, be diſagreeable to you. From the boundleſs generoſity of your diſpoſition, I can eaſily imagine how deeply you have been affected by it: but, for once, conquer that generoſity of temper, and let me perſuade you to make yourſelf happy in giving up that pleaſure to your Wentworth. Let me, my deareſt, my beloved Lucy, have the ecſtatic ſatisfaction, once in my life, of obliging the moſt valuable, the moſt amiable of women. My preſent allowance is ample, and I cannot ſuppoſe that my father, when he returns, though he ſhould refuſe his conſent to my happineſs, will be ſo cruel

as

as to withdraw it. Receive that, therefore, with my hand and heart, and let me be for ever the friend, the lover, the huſband of my Miſs Wheatly.

If you had ſeen his paſſionately-tender looks, and heard him energetically deliver the few words at the latter end of his ſpeech, my dear Mrs. Wilſon, you would no longer have wondered at my prepoſſeſſion for him. However, as he ſtopped here, I replied, with all poſſible compoſure, that whether I accepted of his generous offer or not, I ſhould ſtill retain the higheſt ſenſe of the obligation I was under to him, in propoſing to receive a woman without any thing: but that I was thoroughly aſſured, that if his father had objections to me, when I was poſſeſſed of a large fortune, he would certainly not agree to my becoming his daughter when I had nothing; and

and that I had too ſincere an eſteem for him, to think of an union which might exaſperate his father againſt him, in my preſent circumſtances. I entreated him, therefore, to flatter himſelf no longer with hopes which muſt certainly end in diſappointment, but learn to pay that obedience to his father which I was very ſorry I had made him, even for one moment, forget.

No, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, with a reſolute tone, never think that I can obey him, if he requires me to give you up—Obedience, in that caſe, is impoſſible. If I did not love you with ſuch ardour of paſſion that my life muſt be a burthen without you, yet I would not, I could not deſert you now, when you have more need of all my friendſhip, all my tenderneſs, than ever. And be aſſured, continued he, preſſing my hand fervently to his boſom, that this is my

firm

firm reſolution. I have formed my plan: ſo that if my father refuſes his conſent, or even withdraws his allowance, I can ſtill ſupport my love, though not in the manner I wiſh to do: yet ſtill, I hope, in a ſituation which may be rendered happy by my unwearied ſolicitude, and perpetual attention to make it ſo.

I looked, I believe, rather ſurprized at what he ſaid; or at leaſt full of doubts: for he repeated his reſolutions, and urged his capacity and ſtrength to labour for me in any ſtation moſt likely to furniſh us with the neceſſary accommodations of life. While he was exerting all his powers to make me comply with his propoſals, Sir Edward Balchen came in; and having heard Wentworth's laſt words, interrupted him with ſaying, I know, Miſs Wheatly, that were I to throw my whole fortune at your feet, it would be unenjoyed, nay rejected,

jected, without your Wentworth: and indeed I have too ſincere a friendſhip for him, to wiſh to make myſelf happy at his expence. Happy I could never be, were I married to the fineſt woman nature ever formed, unleſs I was the ſole object of her affections. Suffer me, therefore, to contribute towards your mutual felicity, in rendering you perfectly independant, by ſettling on you both ſuch an income as may make your ſituation in life entirely eaſy: ſuch an income as will make you depend only on each other for your happineſs, and then I am ſure your happineſs will be both ſolid and laſting.

I was ſo aſtoniſhed at this unexpected proof of diſintereſted friendſhip, that I could not ſpeak. Wentworth was not in the ſame tongue-tied ſituation: with an animated look, and lively attitude, he ſaid, Independant, Balchen? Do you think to make

make me independent, by laying me under obligations which I ſhall never be able to repay? No, my generous friend, let me return all due acknowledgments for this eminent proof of the goodneſs of your heart; but believe me, dear as your friendſhip is to me, I can never bear to be indebted to another for the ſupport of my Lucy.

Sir Edward was going to reply, with no leſs warmth and ardour, when my uncle, who had been for ſome time liſtening to our converſation, though we had been too deeply engaged in attending to each other to obſerve when he entered the room, ſaid, You are a couple of noble young fellows, but to put an end to your generous and friendly diſputes, and to relieve Lucy's anxiety, I am come to tell you that our couſin has made off; though if he had not taken himſelf away, we ſhould have have routed him

him very ſoon ; for my lawyer, to whom I ſent an expreſs, is arrived in town. Among the writings of your eſtate, continued he, addreſſing himſelf to me, there is a certificate of the death of Richard Wheatly, of Madras, aged eight years, well atteſted. So I give you joy upon the occaſion.

I ſcarce knew how we looked upon the communication of this agreeable piece of news; but I know that Wentworth and myſelf only expreſſed our ſatisfaction with our eyes.

Sir Edward cried, And is this raſcal to go unpuniſhed, for having attempted ſo vile an impoſition ?

Unpuniſhed he muſt eſcape, ſaid my uncle, if we cannot catch him him; and he is, I ſuppoſe, far enough by this time. He had, no doubt, made enquiries, and found, that he had nothing

nothing to do, but to decamp as ſoon as poſſible.

The entrance of my aunt and Lady Julia, to whom the former had communicated what my uncle related to us, threw us into a new train of converſation. Soon after Wentworth left us, followed by Sir Edward.

When Lady Julia and I were alone, ſhe told me, in the ſtrongeſt terms, what vexation ſhe had felt on my account, occaſioned by this diſagreeable event, and aſſured me that ſhe had more than once been at my door ſince ſhe heard of it, to offer me all the conſolation and aſſiſtance in her power, but was not let in. I could not, however, be eaſy, continued ſhe, till I had ſeen you; I therefore made another attempt to day, and think myſelf very happy in arriving at ſuch a fortunate moment.

I made

I made all poſſible returns to her for her politeneſs, and was not aſhamed to tell her that my embarraſſment at firſt hearing of this affair had rendered me quite unfit for converſation.

This Lady Julia is really of a very ſweet diſpoſition. I wiſh that Sir Edward could like her: but he is ſo delicate in his taſte, ſo refined in his notions, as Wentworth tells me, that it will be no eaſy matter to make a conqueſt of ſuch an heart. They are certainly both amiable characters, in their own way; and for that reaſon, I think an union between them would not be amiſs.

But will not you call me both negligent and ungrateful, my dear Mrs. Wilſon, in not returning my ſincereſt thanks to you, for your moſt friendly offers, when you began to fear that I ſhould have but too much reaſon to accept

accept of them. Such friends as my Annabell, and her excellent family, are not to be met with every day. To ſuch friends only would I wiſh to be obliged.

With my moſt grateful acknowledgements, my dear, let my endeavours ever be joined to preſerve ſuch valuable friends, and to render myſelf every way worthy their affectionate eſteem. I am, my deareſt Annabell,

Your moſt ſincere

L. W.

LETTER LVII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

I Begin to be abſolutely ſick of London, and all its diverſions. They carried me the other night to Vauxhall, which, if not incumbered with ſo many ſeats, crouding one upon the back of another, and thereby loſes its rural ſimplicity, would be, in my opinion, a more pleaſing place. The manner in which theſe ſeats are filled does not always give them an advantageous appearance. The walks are agreeable; but in them you cannot hear the muſic; though the muſic is very little attended to. I confeſs freely to you, that I prefer the warbling of the birds among the trees, on which it is natural to expect them, to any other melody. Do not I talk quite like a country girl? I certainly do, and look like one too; for though I have

have been in London above theſe eight months, I have not, I find, entirely got rid of my ruſtic air, and of ſome expreſſions apt to accompany ſuch an appearance. But to return to Vaux-hall. My uncle often broke into a loud laugh, and cries, I am afraid, child, that we ſhall never acquire the *bon ton*.

Wentworth and Sir Edward ſeemed to glory in my ſimplicity, while Lady Julia, with a ſweet ſmile, corrected my errors in converſation.

What always in this party, me-thinks I hear you ſay? We are, I think, almoſt always together. We ſeem to ſuit each other, and the world is not offended, as Wentworth's al-liance with Lady Julia is reckoned a thing certain.

But am I not to blame (ſometimes I condemn myſelf) for bringing him ſo

ſo much in her way, and thereby encouraging the pleaſure which ſhe may poſſibly take in ſeeing him, when I know that he can never think of her in the manner both their fathers deſign he ſhould? Yet our being continually together, is, by no means, my doing. She would be always with me. Her rank in life, her obliging behaviour, and her amiable diſpoſition, make it impoſſible for me to decline her acquaintance at preſent. Wentworth, you may be ſure, ſeeks all opportunities of being with me, eſpecially when he can manage in ſuch a manner as not to appear particular; for with any appearance of ſingularity in his viſits to me, Lady Julia would, he knows, be alarmed. His intimacy with Sir Edward ſufficiently apologizes for his being of our party; and Sir Edward comes to wait upon his relation. Thus, my dear, all theſe ſeeming improprieties are ſettled in a moment,

moment; and now you want to know how we all conduct ourselves.

Why, Wentworth treats Lady Julia with much distant respect; and, at my desire, is no way particular to me, but when he can be so quite unobserved. Sir Edward is gallant to us all, by turns, and nothing more: while Lady Julia and I are too well satisfied with their conduct to look severe upon them. My aunt and my uncle, who would have been first mentioned had I not thought that you would have been less interested about them, behave quite like a man of fashion and his wife; that is, they are perfectly easy with, and perfectly indifferent to each other. Whatever Lady Julia thinks, she never lets out any thing relating to her sentiments concerning Wentworth, but speaks of him only in general terms; and as I have, since his recovery, taken care not to mention him to her when

I could poſſibly help it, I hope ſhe will not be rendered unhappy: ſhe will not be ſo, if ſhe has a juſt notion of her ſenſibility.

Harriet is married, my dear; my uncle and aunt aſſiſted at the ceremony, having firſt preſented every thing to her proper for her to appear in upon the occaſion. To-morrow ſhe ſets out with her huſband and mother, to his living: the latter is to board with them. I heartily wiſh them all happineſs, but I am afraid that they will not ſo ſoon find it.

Sir George alſo, I am told, will in a ſhort time go through the ſame ceremony, which ought to induce him to make a thorough change in his way of life; but I am apt to think that he won't be affected by it. The lady is very beautiful; but I heard Sir Edward ſay that he had, notwithſtanding, taken, within this week,

week, an opera dancer into keeping, one of the moſt extravagant and moſt fantaſtic of the women of that ſtamp. Can women of fortune and education expect any better huſbands, my dear, if they will make no diſtinction among men, but be as ready to give themſelves to one with vicious principles and bad habits, as to the moſt worthy of his ſex: nay, ſuch a man is frequently preferred on account of his peculiar addreſs and cleverneſs; and too often, his very vices recommend him; for they often chuſe a lover who has had a number of attachments, either becauſe they fancy that he is particularly agreeable, or becauſe they flatter themſelves that they ſhall, by their own ſuperior attractions, fix their roving hearts. How frequently, how commonly, I may add, do we ſee ſuch women, deſervedly—may I not ſay ſo?—diſappointed for their falſe taſte and raſh credulity. Diſappointments

of this kind naturally prompt them to ſeek for diverſion elſewhere, or to redreſs the grievances which they feel within : by theſe means the lady's principles become pretty much upon a par with thoſe of her huſband, and they grow abſolutely tired of each other's company.

You will not, I am perſuaded, my dear Mrs. Wilſon, ever make one of theſe eaſy wives ; but on the contrary, by every pleaſing mark of duty and affection, hourly increaſe the happineſs of your amiable huſband. That you may always do ſo is the ſincere wiſh of

Your ever affectionate,

L. W.

LETTER LIX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY fate, whatever it is to be, is now approaching faſt: the apprehenſions I am under about it are inconceivable: but before I enter upon this ſubject, let me proceed in a regular way. Wentworth, more than ever aſſiduous to pleaſe me, at my requeſt, kept from viſiting me, ever ſince our party at Vauxhall; but a few days ago he came in, with ſuch a diſcompoſure in his air that I was alarmed at it. He was uncommonly ſerious, and looked as if his ſpirits had been very much, and were ſtill greatly agitated. Before I could enquire into the cauſe of this change in him, he aſked me if I was at leiſure, and could ſpare him half an hour's attention? My eager curioſity, let me ſay rather my tender concern,

though both, I believe, were united, made me immediately comply with his requeſt.

He threw himſelf into a chair; and, laying his head upon his hand, ſaid, with an interrupted voice, Oh! Miſs Wheatly, I have ſeen my father, I am juſt come from him.

Here the emotions, which he could no longer ſtifle, prevented his farther utterance. You muſt imagine that this was too intereſting an affair to ſuffer me to remain unmoved, excluſive of my concern for him. I roſe up immediately from the harpſichord, and with an eagerneſs in my looks, while I trembled all over, ſat down by him. The dejection in his countenance boded, I thought, no good; and the ſighs which he heaved, and the tears which fell from his eyes in ſpite of his endeavours to conceal them, pained my heart. I wiſhed to

ſpeak

ſpeak to him, yet knew not how to addreſs myſelf to him : he wiſhed, I ſaw, as much, to make me acquainted with his feelings, but was not able to communicate them. At laſt, after a burſt of tears, which ſeemed in ſome meaſure to relieve his full heart, he turned towards me, and ſeeing me hang over him in ſilent attention, while my eyes ſympathized with his, took me in his arms, and ſtraining me to his breaſt, Do not let me diſtreſs that dear, gentle boſom, ſaid he ; I cannot bear to give you ſo much anxiety ; yet to whom could I ſo properly fly, in order to eaſe my burthened heart, as to her who has, and ever will have, the entire poſſeſſion of it ? The firſt ſight of my father, and the affectionate manner in which he recived me, gave me a tranſport I never knew till then : it has almoſt overpowered my ſenſes : but I will not, I cannot, indeed, deſcribe it ; though I ſhall

deeply feel it for ſome time. Oh! my Lucy! can he but be brought to approve of my paſſion for you, I ſhall then have nothing farther to wiſh.

I would have interrupted him here, to expreſs the ſatisfaction which I felt at his having received ſo much delight in becoming acquainted with a parent to whom he had hitherto been a ſtranger; and accordingly began to ſay ſomething to that purpoſe: but he gazed at me tenderly, and ſeemed ſtill ſo deſirous to tell me about Lord G—, that I ſtopped almoſt as ſoon as I had opened my lips.

My father, continued he, is the moſt amiable man in the world; he will be every thing I can deſire, if— Oh! Lucy, Lucy, the ſuſpenſe in which I remain, almoſt diſtracts me. When the affecting ſenſations which we both felt, at our firſt meeting, began

began to ſubſide a little, I told him of my paſſion for you, in terms which plainly diſcovered all your excellencies, and at the ſame time ſhewed that exiſtence, without you, would be a burthen. He liſtened to me with the kindeſt attention, and when I had finiſhed, with a look which, without the aſſiſtance of words, aſſured him that my life depended upon his anſwer ; he thus replied :

My dear, dear Harry, to find ſuch a ſon as you, and to refuſe him a requeſt made in a manner which plainly diſcovers the conſequence it is of to his happineſs, hurts me moſt ſenſibly ; yet I in ſome meaſure deſerve the pain which it gives me, by attempting to engage your heart without your conſent ; too, too well I know, continued he, with a ſigh, how impoſſible it is to make our inclinations always ſubſervient to thoſe who have, no doubt, ſome right to expect

a compliance from us. Yet when I choſe for you, my ſon, I thought I had been ſo particularly careful, not only with regard to the birth and fortune of the lady, which are generally firſt, and too often chiefly conſidered, by a parent, but alſo with regard to her perſonal attractions and her diſpoſition, which is ſo different from that of the giddy flutterers of her ſex, that I flattered myſelf I ſhould meet with no demurring on your part; imagining that you would rather think yourſelf indebted to me, for finding out ſo amiable a miſtreſs for you: grieved am I, therefore, my dear ſon, to find myſelf ſo miſtaken; but give me a little time to become better acquainted with you; to ſee and know both theſe ladies; and then give me leave, my Harry, to tell you, with all the tenderneſs of a father, and all the freedom of a friend, my ſentiments on ſo intereſt in a ſubject, in which the happineſs

of

of your future days is concerned; and a ſubject of ſo delicate a nature, that no haſty determinations can be made upon it.

With this anſwer, my Lucy, continued Wentworth, looking dejected at his father's reply, I muſt be ſatisfied at preſent; but be aſſured, dear as my father is to me, I can never comply with his requeſt, though he ſhould make it in the moſt affecting manner, to give up my beloved Lucy for another: I ſpeak of his requeſt, though that is too humiliating a word to uſe, when ſpeaking of a parent; but his tenderneſs for me is ſo great, that he will never, I believe, bring himſelf to command me to be wretched, though the very refuſing him muſt inevitably make me ſo.

Then you ſhall never refuſe him, for me, ſaid I, Mr. Wentworth, with a firmneſs of which I did not think myſelf

myſelf capable; never ſhall you be wretched on your Lucy's account. Give me up at once; conſent to marry Lady Julia: ſhe is amiable: ſhe is worthy of you: make Lord G—m happy, and let me be ſo, in knowing that nothing but the duty which you owe to a parent, could oblige you to quit me for another.

Though I felt myſelf ready to ſink, while I ſpoke the above words, I ſtrove to keep down the tender paſſions. I ſtrove to repreſs every affecting ſenſation: and I partly, I believe ſucceeded: for his countenance underwent a change in an inſtant: ſeizing both my hands, while he looked at me with a paſſionate earneſtneſs, he eagerly cried, have you then ceaſed to love me, Miſs Wheatly?

I could ſcarce ſtand againſt this queſtion: 'twas a trying one. I turned

ed my face away: he ſtill held my hands, but I made no anſwer, I was incapable of ſpeaking.

Will you not anſwer me, ſaid he? will you not look on me? Why this averted countenance? I cannot bear it: oh! why do you turn thus from me?

To hide my weakneſs, if it is weakneſs, replied I, burſting into tears which I could no longer refrain: leave me, Mr. Wentworth a little to myſelf: I ſhall have more reſolution to give you up, when you are abſent.

Give me up, cried he? and do you imagine that I will ever ſubmit to ſuch a cruel reſolution? No! the tendereſt, the ſtricteſt duty which I owe to my father, cannot make me entertain the moſt diſtant thoughts of leaving my Lucy. I would as ſoon give up my life; nor will he, when

when he ſees you, deſire ſuch a ſacrifice. Let me therefore, dry up thoſe tears which pierce my very ſoul: I cannot bear to ſee them: nor can I bear to ſee you endeavour to hide that tenderneſs from me which makes all the happineſs which I enjoy in this world.

I was indeed, not in a ſituation to conceal the emotions which I felt, while he preſſed my face to his, and begged me, if I had the leaſt regard for his peace to compoſe my agitated ſpirits.

I ſtrove to withdraw myſelf from his arms, but in vain, till he made me declare that nothing which his father ſhould ſay, ſhould occaſion any alteration in the ſentiments which I had ſo long entertained in his favour, as he was determined, on no terms whatever to releaſe me from the

the promiſe which I had more than once made, to be his alone

What could I do, my dear, thus diſtreſt? I know very well what I ought to have done: but I had not ſufficient ſtrength of mind to conquer an inclination ſo powerful; eſpecially when I ſaw how exquiſitely Wentworth ſuffered by the ſlighteſt expreſſion of coolneſs in my behaviour to him.

He could hardly prevail on himſelf to leave me; ſo fearful was he, leſt I ſhould in his abſence think it neceſſary to do violence to my inclination merely to oblige Lord G—m. He went and returned three or four times, and would fain have extorted a more ſolemn promiſe than I had yet made to him, but I had firmneſs enough to perſiſt in refuſing that requeſt.

Re-

Remember then, cried he, with an earneſtneſs which ſhewed of what conſequence my keeping my reſolution was to him, remember that I expect all my happineſs from you: were I poſſeſſed of the greateſt treaſure which this world can beſtow, I could not be happy without my deareſt Lucy.

When he was gone, I ſat down, and endeavoured to recollect what had paſſed between us: I found myſelf in ſo diſagreeable a ſituation that the more I reflected on it the worſe it appeared to me.

Sir Edward came in, while I was thus ruminating, and blamed me exceedingly for giving way to deſpair.

Can you really now imagine, Miſs Wheatly, ſaid he, that Lord G—m will be ſo tyrannical as a parent, or ſo blind as

a man, as to refuſe his conſent to ſuch a woman's coming into his family?

You flatter me, Sir Edward, replied I, you have never indeed done any thing elſe: but ſuppoſe I ſhould not appear totally diſagreeable to him, how is he to get rid of his promiſe to the Earl?

Very eaſily to be ſure.—Let him plead his ſon's prior engagement.

And do you imagine that the Earl will be ſatisfied with that plea?

He muſt, you know, if Wentworth is ſteady, and I hope you have no doubt concerning his fidelity to you.

No, replied I, all my concern ariſes from ſeeing him ſo uneaſy.

Pſhaw,

Pſhaw, ſaid Sir Edward, are not all lovers uneaſy: a tender look and a few ſoothing expreſſions will bring him to himſelf again preſently: and, indeed, you ought not to be ſo ſparing of thoſe little endearments. As Wentworth has long and faithfully loved you, his paſſion demands and deſerves all decent returns: you cannot imagine Miſs Wheatly, how much theſe trifles keep a paſſion alive, or help to increaſe its warmth in a fond and grateful breaſt.

I am ſure, cried I, bluſhing, he has no reaſon to complain of me, I am only too tender.

What an inchanting naïveté there is, ſaid he, in every thing you ſay or do? Lord G—m, will be more than half in love with you himſelf, when he ſees you, or he is not the man I take him to be.

As

As the ſervant announced ſome company, Sir Edward ran off, before I could aſk him how he thought Lady Julia would receive the news of Wentworth's being engaged to me. I am aſhamed to ſee her juſt now.—I ſhall appear, methinks in her preſence, ſuch an odious hypocrite, and guilty of ſo much deceit. I abſolutely hate myſelf, and fear I ſhall be, by this unſettled, irregular behaviour, equally odious in your eyes, my Annabell. Write ſoon to your

Ever affectionate

L. W.

LET-

LETTER LX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

YOU cannot imagine, my dear Mrs. Wilſon, what I have gone through ſince my laſt. You remember the anxiety I was in, concerning Wentworth: whether I ought to give him up or not. Sir Edward's endeavours to laugh me out of that anxiety did not ſucceed: it ſtill remained, and employed all my thoughts, when I was ſurprized with a viſit from Lord G—m.

Though I had reaſon to expect to ſee him, when the ſervant brought in his name, I trembled all over, and could ſcarce collect my ſpirits, ſo as to receive his Lordſhip in the manner I wiſhed.

I was alone, when he entered, with my work in my hand.—The perfect image of my Wentworth: 'twas he himſelf, with the addition only of a few years: his ſhape, his air, his fine eyes, all ſtrengthened the reſemblance.—Here only the difference betwixt them was very conſpicuous: inſtead of that amiable diffidence ſo charming in his ſon, Lord G—m had a ſpirited aſſurance in his look and behaviour.

He ſtarted a little at his entrance, as if he was ſurpriſed at the ſight of me: and then advancing to me, is the La'y whom I have the honour to ſalute, Miſs Wheatly, Madam?

Yes my Lord, replied I, feeling myſelf covered with bluſhes at the ſame time, occaſioned by the particularity in his manner of ſurveying me.

I de-

I deſired him to be ſeated, he complied with a grace in every action peculiar to himſelf, and my Wentworth, for I never obſerved ſuch gracefulneſs in any other men, and then made a ſhort but polite apology for his intruſion, as he called it, but ſaid that his ſon had been ſo very warm in his panegyrics upon me, that he could not reſiſt the deſire he had to converſe with a Lady who had made ſo deep an impreſſion upon his heart.

I bowed, but was ſilent. Sure, my dear, there never was a more awkward ſituation.—Though I was quite charmed with this nobleman, and though it was both my intereſt and the firſt wiſh of my heart, to make myſelf agreeable to him, yet my very fears took away from me all my powers: and I could not even attempt to make myſelf ſo.

Luckily

Luckily for me, I pleaſed without any effort to give pleaſure. Lord G—m, who ſaw me embaraſſed, (he has ſince declared that my ſweet confuſion, as he called it, was my greateſt charm) we ſoon entered into a converſation upon general ſubjects, and thereby reſtored me to that eaſe and ſprightlineſs which are ſo natural to me, and then by almoſt inſenſible degrees introduced the particular one, upon which he wiſhed to hear me expatiate. On that indeed, I was far from being ſilent. I ſpoke of his ſon, as he deſerved; I related his extenſive liberalities; and diſplayed the goodneſs of his heart in terms that diſcovered what an impreſſion they had made on me.—

I ſaw with pleaſure the father, in every look and action.—This gave new tranſports to my delighted heart, always delighted when I am talking of my Wentworth.

My

My looks I ſuppoſe plainly expreſſed my feelings, for Lord G—m ſeemed to admire me, if poſſible, more than his ſon.—He gazed at me with an uncommon eagerneſs of attention, and appeared to be abſolutely charmed with me. He praiſed my complexion, my hair, my teeth: but my eyes, he ſaid, were lively beyond deſcription, entirely irreſiſtable.

Excuſe me, my dear, I only repeat his words.—

No wonder, ſaid he, that my dear Harry, with his ſenſibility, was unable to withſtand the united charms of a lovely perſon, and a ſtill more lovely mind. But I am not yet acquainted with all your perfections, Miſs Wheatly, continued he: you excell in muſic: there is nothing I am ſo paſſionately fond of: and I flatter myſelf that I have ſome taſte. Do me the favour, therefore, to let me hear

hear that harmonious voice, accompanied by your inſtrument.

After what you have ſaid, my Lord, replied I, to exhibit my little ſkill before you, who are ſo good a judge, will throw me into the utmoſt confuſion.

How amiable, how enchanting is that ſweet diffidence, ſaid he, 'tis that which makes you ſo captivating. But I ſhall be equally charmed with you, whether you ſing or not; for your manner of excuſing yourſelf is as winning as your compliance would be.

I ſat down, however, to the harpſichord, and though I was in a violent flutter, threw him into an ecſtacy.

He roſe up, and cried out, Harry is entirely acquitted. I blame him no longer.—Soon afterwards took his leave.

Now, what am I to think of all this? His Lordſhip's flattering ſpeeches raiſes my hopes, I own, at the time; but as ſoon as he had left me, I ſunk again into uncertainty and deſpair.

Adieu, my deareſt Mrs. Wilſon; you ſhall hear again ſoon from

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

LETTER LXI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

OH! my Annabell, my deareſt friend, the morning after I diſpatched my laſt letter to you, Wentworth came into my dreſſing-room much more melancholy, I think, than ever I ſaw him; his countenance was dejection itſelf.

As

As I had flattered myſelf with hopes, from Lord G—m's viſit, I was prepared to receive him with uncommon chearfulneſs, and ran to welcome him, more lively than ever. But he turned from me, and with an heart-breaking ſigh, cried, ah! Miſs Wheatley, what miſery is to be my lot?

Good H—ns, cried I aſtoniſhed, what new trouble has happened? Your father was here yeſterday, and did not ſeem to be diſatisfied with me.

Diſſatisfied, replied he mournfully, No, no, there was no fear of being diſſatisfied: ſo far from being ſo, he is too well pleaſed with you. He is, in ſhort, charmed to ſo violent a degree, that he proteſts he cannot live without you, and has pitched upon me to tell you ſo. Oh! Miſs Wheatley, this cruel requeſt is an

addition to my misfortunes. Ever ſure as you was to pleaſe, with the moſt indifferent behaviour, why did you have recourſe to all theſe enchanting graces which render you an object too lovely to be reſiſted? Why did you throw ſuch fire into your ſweet eyes; yet at the ſame time temper that fire with ſuch winning ſoftneſs? Why was your complection ſo animated? Why were your ſmiles ſo enchanting? Why was your voice ſo harmoniouſly melting? Why, in ſhort, was your whole perſon ſo richly adorned with a thouſand beauties, which have made Lord G—m ſo abſolutely raving to be poſſeſſed of it.

Good H—ns, cried I again, Mr. Wentworth! quite aſtoniſhed and bluſhing exceſſively, what can you mean by all this? I thought it would be for our mutual intereſt to render myſelf agreeable to your father, when he

he honoured me with a viſit. I did nothing more.

I was ſo ſurpriſed at, and diſconcerted by this his firſt and apparent diſapprobation of my conduct, that I looked abaſhed, I trembled, and the tears came into my eyes.

This was more than he could bear. He flew to me, and ſaid, Forgive me, my deareſt Lucy, if I have expreſſed myſelf too warmly; but if you had heard Lord G—m's raptures when he returned from his viſit to you, and the encomiums which he laviſhed upon the beauties of your face, the elegance of your figure, the charms of your converſation, your taſte and execution in ſinging, you would not wonder at my apprehenſions. I do not blame you for endeavouring to make yourſelf agreeable to him, my deareſt; you would have been ſo without any endeavours, but the pleaſure which

my father found in his viſit to you, will be fatal to my peace.

Certainly, ſaid I, you cannot be jealous of your father.

Not jealous? replied he haſtily: I have all the reaſon in the world to be ſo. He then informed me that Lord G—m had ſaid all that he had repeated, over and over; and had concluded with telling him that he never yet had ſeen a woman ſo completely amiable; and that as I was ſo attached to him, and as there was ſo ſtrong a reſemblance between them, bating the difference of a few years, he thought the title and eſtate which he could offer to me, with the extreme tenderneſs he muſt ever feel for ſo amiable a creature, would more than compenſate for changing the ſon for the father.

Gracious H—n, exclaimed I, can it be poſſible for him to be ſerious? or

or can he think that I will ever conſent to ſuch a prepoſterous alliance ?

He does, he does indeed, my Lucy, ſaid Wentworth, in an agony of deſpair ; and told me, that if I was willing to preſerve his life, I muſt come this day and plead his paſſion to you for him.

Let him die then, cried I eagerly, if he is ſo unworthy of life ; though there is no fear of his death in the leaſt. A father who wiſhes to tear from ſuch a ſon as you a woman whom he has ſo long loved, cannot feel the ſlighteſt degree of affection ; he muſt be quite deſtitute of ſenſibility ; he muſt be every thing that's horrid : I would fly to the fartheſt part of the earth to avoid ſuch a wretch. Make yourſelf perfectly eaſy therefore, Mr. Wentworth, continued I, with a ſpirit I never, I think, felt before : let us leave this unnatural

man to himſelf, and let my affection and my fortune make you amends for the loſs of your father's friendſhip.

My life, my angel, ſaid Wentworth, how you every moment encreaſe my tenderneſs for you; but yet, if my father really feels what he expreſſes, how much I pity him!

He deſerves no pity, nor regard, I anſwered, at leaſt from me.

I was thus raving, with a little kind of fury with which I never remember to have been agitated before, when, to my great amazement, Lord G—m opened the door, and, coming up to us, What do I not deſerve, ſaid he, ſmiling on me with the utmoſt complacency, when I am come to aſſure you that you can only make me happy, Miſs Wheatly, by preſerving your amiable tenderneſs which you have

ever ſhewn for my dear, dear Harry, who, I will venture to ſay, is every way worthy of your affection.

I heard no more; the ſudden, the unexpected ſurpriſe, the momentous change was too great; my fluttered ſpirits could not bear the pleaſurable ſhock; I ſunk back in my chair, without motion. How long I remained in a motionleſs, inſenſible ſtate, I know not: all I know is, that when I returned to the poſſeſſion of my faculties, I found myſelf in the arms of Wentworth, who looked as pale as death, and had a terrifying anxiety painted in his countenance, which I had never beheld in it till then; while Lord G—m, with the moſt concerned aſpect, ſat on the other ſide of me with an eau-de-luce bottle.

The firſt opening of my eyes cauſed an emotion of joy in my Wentworth,

which had nearly thrown him into the condition from which I was juſt recovering. Lord G—m ſeemed to be equally diſtreſſed to know what to do with us; and ſpent the time, during which we kept an affecting ſilence, rendered more ſo by the looks which we exchanged, in making a number of excuſes to me, for having given ſuch a ſhock to my ſpirits, declaring, that he only had a curioſity to know how far our love would carry us. He acknowledged the folly of ſuch a proceeding, and blamed himſelf alſo very ſeverely for having formed an engagement for his ſon, without firſt conſulting his inclination; apologizing for what he had done, by ſaying, that as he had never known his ſon perſonally, after his infancy, he had not been able to ſuppoſe him half ſo valuable as he found him to be. I own, continued he, that with all your perfections, more than I have ever ſeen in one woman,

I ſhould

I ſhould have been ſorry not to have found your attachment to my Harry as ſtrong as his to you, of which I am now thoroughly aſſured; and it is indeed ſtronger than I could have believed. If therefore, my dear Miſs Wheatly, you can forgive the father, diſcover your forgiving diſpoſition, by accepting of the ſon.

I do accept him, my Lord, ſaid I, recovering myſelf, and giving my hand to Wentworth; and if you had come a moment ſooner, you would have heard me give myſelf to him before.

I heard all, ſaid my Lord. I followed my ſon on purpoſe that I might be witneſs to your behaviour upon ſo very intereſting an occaſion; and feed the ſervant to let me remain a few moments in the next room. Believe me, Madam, I never ſpent happier moments, becauſe I was convinced

vinced of your diſintereſted regard for my Harry. Before I was ſo convinced, I imagined that when he ſaid ſo much to me about your loving him as ſincerely as he loved you, he ſpoke rather according to his wiſhes, and amuſed himſelf with flattering ideas. But now I am ſatisfied that he is truly eſteemed by you. Be happy, therefore, my dear children, if your excellent hearts, with my beſt endeavours, and a very large part of my fortune, which I ſhall immediately make over to you, and ſettle upon this lady, can make you ſo.

Wentworth was not able to ſpeak. He graſped his father's hand, and preſſed it to his lips, while with the other he held that which I had offered to him, cloſe to his boſom. Lord G—m, quite affected with his ſon's inexpreſſible tranſport, ſtrained him in his arms, and bid him take care to cheriſh and preſerve the extreme

treme affection which I had ſhewn for him. After he had aſked me if he might ſpeak to Mr. Mordaunt, he left us together, ſaying, that he ſuppoſed Harry would be glad to enjoy a few moments alone with his Love.

My firſt, my only love, cried the tranſported Wentworth, preſſing me to his boſom—never, never will I have any other.

You may imagine, my deareſt Mrs. Wilſon, that my joy was no leſs than his. It was indeed too great for utterance. After having been ſo long in doubt, almoſt in deſpair, we could ſcarcely either of us believe the reality of what we had heard. But as there is no permanent pleaſure in this world, Wentworth's tranſports were interrupted by ſo many fears and anxieties about my health, leſt this unexpected flow of happineſs ſhould hurt my tender ſpirits, that his

his mind was not totally at eaſe for a long time. He declared, that when he ſaw me faint away, the agony which he felt had almoſt deprived him alſo of his ſenſes, and that his diſtraction at ſeeing me in that ſtate of inſenſibility, was neither to be endured nor deſcribed; and I was obliged to be perpetually anſwering a thouſand affectionate queſtions, which proceeded from his extreme diſquietude on my account, during that day which he ſpent with us.

Lord G—m ſoon returned with my uncle. I found by their ſmiling faces, that they had ſettled every thing to each other's ſatisfaction. As to my uncle, I fancy you will believe him to be of an eaſy diſpoſition; however, I can entirely truſt to my Wentworth's care of my happineſs; and indeed I may place the ſame confidence in Lord G—m; for he ſhews, I think, as much attention

tion to me, in his way, as his ſon does.

I ſhould be apprehenſive, my dear, that I had quite tired you with the length of this letter, were I not certain that you read with a particular pleaſure every thing relating to the affairs of

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

LETTER LXII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

AS you have for ſo long a time heard of nothing but my ſorrows, my deareſt Annabell, you muſt now be troubled, not a little, with my joys. They indeed flow in upon me ſo faſt, that I know not where to begin.

begin. Every hour is ſpent in felicity, and in forming new ſchemes to encreaſe it.

What is become of Lord G—m's promiſe to the Earl, you will ſay; and how does Lady Julia bear the loſs of her lover? My Wentworth tells me, that his father waited on the Earl, as ſoon as he had conſented to our union, and told his Lorſhip how infinitely concerned he was for being obliged to break his word with him; but that his ſon had, unknown to him, engaged his affections to a woman of fortune and character, and that it was impoſſible for him to cancel his engagements, as no laws, human or divine, would ſupport him in ſo doing; that the Earl at firſt expreſſed great reſentment, and talked in very high terms; but that Lord G—rn, by patiently acknowledging the greatneſs of the diſappointment, and making uſe of ſoft words, at laſt

brought

brought him to hear reaſon, though the affront offered to his pride made him, for a long time, unwilling to give way.

I enquired after Lady Julia, for I cannot prevail on myſelf to viſit her at this juncture, becauſe I think that I ſhould appear guilty of a breach of friendſhip; and therefore keep out of her ſight. Wentworth knows nothing about her. Inſenſible to every thing at preſent, but his father and me, he gives himſelf up to the tranſports after which he has ſo long heavily ſighed, and divides his hours between us, when we are not all together, and we generally are ſo, for Lord G—m is almoſt as much with me as his ſon is.

I cannot, by any adequate expreſſions, make you conceive the brilliancy of the jewels which his Lordſhip has ordered to be ſet for me;

me; concerning which my fancy, with regard to the form and pattern of them, has been conſulted; tho' indeed, my Annabell, they give me ſo very little pleaſure, compared to that which I have received from the ſatisfaction which Lord G—m expreſſes at my approaching union with my dear Harry, for ſo I have been taught to call him by his father, that I ſhould totally diſregard them, were I not under a neceſſity of making him ſome grateful compliments for his having endeavoured to procure me what gives moſt women ſo much delight. One part of my finery will, I confeſs, give me a great deal of ſatisfaction, the only one indeed to which I pay any attention; I mean my bracelets; for I am to have Lord G—m's and my Wentworth's pictures upon my arms, but not till they are enriched with a blaze of diamonds, though that blaze will not encreaſe the value of them in my eyes.

The

The moſt agreeable piece of news however I have ſtill in reſerve. We are to live at—the abbey: Lord G—m makes over that part of his eſtate to his ſon, on which there is a very fine houſe; but my dear Harry, ever ſtudious to pleaſe me, knowing the affection which I have retained for the ſweet place of my birth, and for all the good inhabitants, has prevailed on his father to conſent to our making the abbey the place of our reſidence all the year, except when we give him a month or two of our company in town.

What joy, what infinite delight, my deareſt Annabell, ſhall I feel, to return to the country, to thee, to all my worthy friends. This, I own, gives me a ſatisfaction which I wiſh not to conceal; and therefore I am very frequently expreſſing my grateful thanks to Lord G—m, and to my dear Wentworth; the firſt, the kind

kind propoſer of a ſcheme ſo perfectly agreeable to me. This unexpected favour, conferred upon me when I did not dream of it, doubles the obligation: but it is my Harry's manner of doing things which ſo much enhances the value of them.

I have now ſome reaſon to hope that I may ſpend my time, and the large allowance which is to be allotted to me for my private expences, in being ſerviceable to my neceſſitous neighbours, and in being liberal to thoſe whoſe ſituation in life may be benefitted by the affluence Heaven has bleſſed me with. Do you not think alſo, my Annabell, that I ſhall be ſtill excited to acts of benevolence and humanity, when I am conſtantly with a man ſo eminently conſpicuous for the nobleneſs of his mind, and the extreme ſenſibility which he diſcovers for the ſlighteſt diſtreſs among his fellow-creatures? May the all-

gracious

gracious Being, who has been ſo bountiful to me, and who has given me underſtanding to prefer a man of his exquiſite humanity, to any other, ſtill keep me attentive, with the moſt minute exactneſs, to deſerve ſuch an ineſtimable bleſſing; and make me, in every action of my life, endeavour to diffuſe happineſs to thoſe around me.

Though I have theſe delightful proſpects before me, my dear; yet as they cannot be brought forward immediately, continue to write to me as uſual, or rather, more frequently, to

Your ever affectionate,

L. W.

P. S. I am afraid that you muſt now expect to find me ſometimes writing about bridal ornaments, and ſuch trifles, which are ſo continually before my eyes, that I ſhall inſenſibly take ſome notice of them.

LETTER LXIII.

Mrs. WILSON to Miſs WHEATLY.

THE pleaſure which your laſt letters gave me, my deareſt Lucy, is inexpreſſible. What! to have you down again at the abbey, and united with your amiable Wentworth! This is a happineſs we did not indeed think of at preſent, though it was what we had ſo long and ſo earneſtly deſired. I am, you may be ſure, highly pleaſed that Lord G—m admires you ſo much; it was impoſſible, indeed, for him to ſee you without being prejudiced in your favour, but, after all, was it not an unaccountable whim in his Lordſhip to try you in that manner? Had he known as much of your attachment to his ſon, as I do, he would not have found it neceſſary to give either himſelf or you ſo much trouble.

And

And now I begin to fear, my dear Lucy, that you will be almoſt ready to blame me for harbouring ſo many injurious ſuſpicions about Mr. Wentworth: but if you will be pleaſed to conſider, my dear, that I never, at firſt, doubted his ſincerity: but the obſcurity of his ſituation at that time, made me fearful of truſting a heart ſo full of ſenſibility as your's to ſo much uncertainty. I thank H—n, my dear, that you are now relieved from all the inquietudes which you have ſuffered, and that you are on the point of being agreeably, and ſo juſtly rewarded for all your affections, tenderneſs, and generoſity.

Mr. Wilſon, charmed with Mr. Wentworth when he firſt ſaw him, and having afterwards had ſo much reaſon to eſteem him, ſets no bounds to the joy which he feels at hearing of his approaching felicity in the poſſeſſion of ſo amiable a woman as my Lucy;

Lucy; and begs, if you can find a leiſure moment, that you would make him ſenſible of the extreme regard he entertains for him. I alſo intreat you not to put any reſtraint upon your pen, when you employ it in deſcribing the trifles you take notice of. The wiſeſt of us (not that I preſume to be one of them) have no kind of averſion, at proper ſeaſons, to liſten to the deſcription and enumeration of female ornaments, eſpecially upon ſo intereſting an occaſion. Nor can I with truth aſſert, that I am very deſirous of checking this propenſity in myſelf, as I believe it is perfectly innocent and inoffenſive, and can neither raiſe thoſe diſturbing paſſions, Envy or Jealouſy in me. The very great difference between your ſituation in life and mine, muſt for ever occaſion the ſame difference in our appearance and expectations. Happy in your friendſhip, my Miſs Wheatly, which, I flatter myſelf, even this dear,

this

this ſtrong attachment, will neither deprive me of, nor diminiſh. I beheld, with eyes of delight and ſatiſfaction, every neceſſary preparation to celebrate ſo long-wiſhed-for an event, an event on which I ſhould be glad to make my firſt congratulations to you, were it poſſible for me to be in town at that happy juncture. Seize therefore every opportunity, my beloved friend, to give me all the intelligence in your power: indulge my curioſity, by informing me how Sir Edward (of whom you have ſaid nothing in your two laſt) and Lady Julia, receive the news of your near marriage; and believe me to remain

Your's moſt affectionately,

A. W.

P.S. How much would our joy be encreaſed, could we but ſee the ceremony, which is to make you completely happy, performed amidſt your friends and grateful dependants.

LETTER LXIV.

Miſs WHEATLY to Mrs. WILSON.

WITH what pleaſure, my beloved Annabell, my dear Mrs. Wilſon, did your Lucy receive your expreſſions of joy at the agreeable changes which have lately happened in her affairs, and which will probably lay the foundation of her future felicity.

It is not poſſible for any one to be more beloved than myſelf; and I am not aſhamed to own that my amiable Wentworth deſerves every return in my power.

You aſk me about Sir Edward. I muſt, therefore, ceaſe to talk of him about whom I could talk and write for ever, in order to gratify your curioſity, my dear; but indeed the gratification

tification of it, upon this ſubject, will be extremely ſmall, for I have ſeen very little of him ſince things has been ſettled between Lord G—m and my uncle. He called once to give me joy, he ſaid, but he did not make a long ſtay. Yeſterday he came in juſt after my bracelets were brought home, very opportunely, as I thought, to give his opinion concerning the likeneſs. We all agreed that the painter had robbed the ſon of his graces, to beſtow them upon the father. In ſhort, a great deal of my Harry's youthfulneſs and ſweetneſs is given to Lord G—m. He is not made handſome enough, not, at leaſt, in my eyes; and as Sir Edward ſays ſo too, may I not freely own it?

That you may not think me guilty of any want of politeneſs to Lady Julia, I have called twice at her door, but have not been admitted. I cannot ſay I am ſorry that I have not

ſeen her; however, I think I ought to ſee her, though I do not know how to carry my looks towards her. She can, methinks, never forgive me for depriving her of ſuch a lover, and indeed, ſo ſenſibly do I feel her loſs, that I am afraid I ſhould be apt to lament it with her, and by ſo doing, act extremely out of character you know. She is lovely, and I cannot help pitying her. She muſt ſuffer a great deal, if ſhe has been touched by the tendereſt paſſion for the dear, amiable object, which engroſſes all my attention.

As Lord G—m is perfectly deſirous of making us amends for the little chagrin which he occaſioned on his firſt acquaintance, he is continually ſcheming parties of pleaſure for me, and we ſpend all the time we have to ſpare from the management of weighty affairs, that is, giving orders for the decoration of our perſons, chuſing the ornaments

naments of our equipages, fixing upon our furniture, &c. &c. in viſiting all the pleaſant villas within a day's journey from London, which are worthy of notice. Our fartheſt excurſion has been to Windſor: we performed it within the allotted time, with the help of Lord G—m's beautiful bays, who always go at a prodigious rate. My aunt, Lord G—m, my dear Harry, and myſelf, generally form the party: ſometimes my uncle accompanies us: in that caſe I am placed between my Lord and my Wentworth; and you may be aſſured that I am not neglected by them. It is indeed utterly impoſſible to tell you how extremely affectionate and aſſiduous the latter is: he ſeems but to live, but to breathe for me alone; and though he loves and honours, to a great degree, a father, who, by his great fondneſs and attention to pleaſe him, deſerves all his affection and his duty, yet when I am preſent—muſt

I tell you, even that tender parent, that beloved father, gives place to me, and ſeems delighted ſo to do.

But it is not in theſe parties in which my eyes wander over every thing with a haſty kind of pleaſure only to return to their firſt, their only joy, my beloved Harry; it is the ſweet interchange of our hearts, in the chearful communication of the moſt affecting ſentiments to each other, that I find tranſports which I never knew till now, which till now I never ventured to indulge.

But why ſhould I write thus for ever on a ſubject with which your own ſituation makes you ſo thoroughly acquainted, that I have no occaſion to deſcend to particulars.

Ah! here is Harry behind me. He has ſurprized me in the midſt of my

my moſt delightful employment, and he inſiſts upon my purſuing it.

Inſiſt! has he learnt to inſiſt already? do you ſay. Yes he has, indeed; and I cannot drive him away. He will look over me; he will read what I have written about him: he will devour that dear hand, as he calls it, for writing about him with ſo much tenderneſs. He muſt be obeyed, reſiſtance is vain.—So—now he wants to ſeize my pen:—well—he ſhall have it:—you won't be diſpleaſed, I dare ſay, my Annabell, to receive a few lines from the friend of your Mr. Wilſon.

Mr. WENTWORTH to Mrs. WILSON.

WHAT happineſs awaits me, my dear Mrs. Wilſon, in the poſſeſſion of my dear, my beloved Lucy, the greateſt bleſſing Heave ncould beſtow on me: yet, will you believe me, I am anxious, nay reſtleſs, becauſe you

are ſtill the repoſitory of her moſt charming, her moſt ſecret thoughts, which ought certainly to be lodged only in my fond, my faithful boſom, which always beats, tranſported at her approach, and is quite deprived of comfort when ſhe is abſent. Vainly does ſhe plead that you are her firſt friend, the eſteemed companion of her infant days: my unutterable love will not ſuffer me to approve of ſuch connections; I can hardly think them allowable. She urges, in her defence, that ſhe writes only about me, and that ſhe can, without bluſhing, commit to paper, and to the friend of her heart, what ſhe cannot repeat to me. Have I not, therefore, an indiſputable right to ſeize all your papers, Mrs. Wilſon, and oblige you to give up what would to me be more deſirable than the moſt curious manuſcripts, rendered ever ſo valuable by their antiquity;—one line written by Lucy, would be worth whole reams

reams of paper by another hand. Reſtore to me then, theſe ineſtimable treaſures; on that condition alone, will I permit her to continue this correſpondence. In every thing elſe ſhe ſhall be abſolute, but . . . . ſhe will not let me go on. Aſk Mr. Wilſon, from me, if he ſuffers you to be ſo peremptory.—

Miſs WHEATLY in Continuation.

I have got my pen back again, my Annabell, but had a violent ſtruggle for it. My liberty, you ſee, is almoſt at an end. Don't you feel great compaſſion for

Your ſtill faithful

And affectionate

L. W.

LETTER LXV.

Miſs WHEATLEY to Mrs. WILSON.

I AM ſorry, my deareſt Mrs. Wilſon, that it is not in my power to gratify every wiſh of my kind friends in D—ſhire; but Lord G—m ought certainly to be firſt obliged: he has been ſo very good in permitting us to fix our abode there, that it would be improper (I ſhould indeed be wanting in gratitude) even to hint a deſire oppoſite to his, in any other point.

The day is fixed at a fortnight's diſtance. Eager Harry knew no reſt till I had complied with his importunities.—After we have ſpent another fortnight at Richmond, where Lord G—m has an elegant houſe, we are to ſet out for the Abbey, there to remain till the return of winter:

winter, though I have begged hard, that the time of being in London may be reduced to three months only —my Wentworth aſſures me that all my deſires ſhall be granted as ſoon as known. He is all compliance, all tenderneſs and love. We are now frequently at Richmond, and ſpend many hours in the charming gardens there, particularly in that very walk where I firſt became acquainted with my Harry's fondneſs.—What a pleaſing change in my ſituation! I may now lean on the kind ſupporting arm which has ever been ſo dear to me; and my own inclinations ſo exactly coincide with the returns I owe to my Wentworth's love, that my felicity is boundleſs.

My uncle, my ſeemingly inſenſible uncle, diſcovers more ſatisfaction at my approaching marriage than I could have expected. The virtues of Wentworth, as he is now become more intimate

intimate with him, have opened his eyes, and he begins to have ſome notion of that rectitude of heart which is the true characteriſtic of a man of honour, by which he is rendered happy in himſelf, and a bleſſing to ſociety.

My aunt, without having any notions at all, if I may be permitted to ſay ſo, as her attention is only engaged by well-dreſſed people, well-lighted rooms, and crowded card-tables, buſies herſelf in fancying the diſpoſition of my jewles, in giving directions about the form and number of my gowns, and the richneſs of the ſilks; my linen, laces, &c. all come under her inſpection; and mightily delighted am I that they do; for by this means, I get rid of abundance of trouble about matters which appear to me of very little conſequence, and have an excellent opportunity of paying my aunt the only

only compliment ſhe is capable of reliſhing, by leaving every thing of this nature to her taſte.

Sure of pleaſing my Harry, by my manners, and by the ſincere affection which I feel for him, the decoration of my perſon is of ſuch ſmall conſequence, that I think very little about it: though I will allow, that to preſerve the agreeableneſs of her perſon, is the duty of every married woman, and ought to be her delight: but, certainly, I ſhould imagine that ſuch a duty may be performed without parade; at leaſt, without the employment of much time. There is, doubtleſs, a propriety to be obſerved in dreſs, according to our rank and fortune in the world, but too much ſolicitude about it, is in my opinion a great weakneſs. We ſeem, by being over ſolicitous concerning our outward appearance, to reproach ourſelves, as if we were conſcious of having

having nothing but that to recommend us.

We are too apt to aim at ſecuring the reſpect and attention of others by rich cloaths and a variety of ſhowy ornaments, forgetting all the while to diſtinguiſh ourſelves by the accompliſhments of our minds, and the virtues of our hearts; our moderation in proſperity, by our fortitude in adverſity; our patience, gentleneſs of diſpoſition, reſignation to the will of Heaven, by our ſorrow for the misfortunes of our fellow-creatures, and our kind endeavours to relieve them.

Theſe are the ſentiments, my dear, by which I hope my actions will always be guided.—I was at firſt taught, that the mind required more ornament than the perſon; by my excellent mother, in my earlieſt infancy: and my union with ſo amiable a man as Wentworth, will, I truſt, rather

rather improve thoſe ideas with which ſhe adorned it.—Oh! how I wiſh that my dear, my ever-to-be lamented parent was now alive! with what heart-felt ſatisfaction would ſhe applaud my choice! with what inexpreſſible delight would ſhe receive ſuch a ſon as my amiable Harry! But as we cannot, with any kind of reaſon, hope to have every wiſh of our hearts gratified here on earth, I muſt be content with the bleſſings which I at preſent enjoy: I am content with them: I only fear that I do not deſerve them.—When I think that I have choſen a man for the companion of my life, of whom my judicious mother, where ſhe exiſting here, would approve, I feel a tranſport not to be deſcribed.

You ſee, my deareſt Mrs. Wilſon, that I ſtill find leiſure in the midſt of all my hurries, various occupations, and parties of pleaſure (if I may ſo call

call our viſits and excurſions in order to haſten the flight of time) to write to you, and to aſſure you, that I ſhall never ceaſe to be

Your ſincerely affectionate friend

L.W.

P. S. I have forfot to tell you, that Mr. Farnham, the very Mr. Farnham who look ed with ſo penetrating an eye, and with ſuch ſeverity of aſpect upon me at the Abbey, and could never be prevailed upon to viſit at my uncle's, till the return of Lord G—m to England, ſo faithful was he to the truſt repoſed in him, now comes often to ſee me, and confeſſes that it coſt him a great deal of uneaſineſs to aim at the ſeparation of two people, who, he ſays, are perfectly formed for each other. He now owns that he was ſtruck with my perſon and carriage at firſt, and immedi-

mediately ſaw the danger Mr. Wentworth would be in, upon a nearer acquaintance with, what he was pleaſed to call, my excellent qualities.—You ſee, he has now made me ample amends for his former ſeverity, and he is entitled to my grateful thanks for having trained my Harry's mind to virtue.—Mrs. Farnham, who is ſenſible and agreeable, is not overlooked by me: to her alſo my acknowledgments are due, for the tender care ſhe took of him in that dreadful fever which might have proved ſo fatal to me. For ever be praiſed all gracious Heaven, who ſaved my beloved Harry.

LETTER LXVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

AH! my Annabell, my friend, is there no ſituation on this ſide the grave, in which one may promiſe oneſelf any durable felicity? There is, I am afraid, no ſuch ſituation, at leaſt I have not yet found it.

My laſt letter diſcovered me juſt at the ſummit of my happineſs: every thing had a promiſing appearance: my proſpects were all flattering. I am ſuddenly caſt down to the depth of deſpair: ſhould I be reſtored to happineſs, my life will afford ſtriking leſſons, however, to thoſe who fondly think that there is any permanent pleaſure under the ſun.—I feel, my Annabell, a tender concern

cern for the ſuffering of a gentle mind, wounded in the moſt ſenſible part. Lady Julia, my dear, has fallen ſick, and the Earl, who attributes her illneſs to her diſappointment alone, inſiſts upon Lord G—m's keeping his word with him, which was, he aſſerts, given in ſo ſolemn a manner, that he ſhould never have conſented to releaſe him from it, had he not believed that his daughter having no particular attachment to Wentworth, might be happier with a man, who, from inclination, made his addreſſes to her, than with one who had ſettled his affections upon another: and he was, he ſaid, the more ſatisfied with this his acquieſcence, as ſhe received the news of the affront put upon her with ſo much compoſure; but he now finds that her compoſure, upon the occaſion was entirely owing to the gentleneſs of her diſpoſition, having pined in ſecret ever ſince; and

upon

upon being ſeized with a fever, the phyſicians declare that it is altogether upon her ſpirits, and they have hardly any hopes of her recovery; the Earl, therefore, diſtracted with grief, at the condition to which his daughter is reduced, and foaming with indignation, pride and reſentment, demands his child of Lord G—m, by his immediate compliance with his own offers, as her death would be certainly occaſioned by his refuſal.

In what a world of trouble has this precipitate promiſe involved us all! I pity poor Lady Julia, with all my heart. How much, how very much is ſhe to be pitied, my dear, who is obliged to give up Wentworth! As to him, he proteſts that nothing can compel him to fulfill his father's promiſe, to which he well knows he never aſſented: that as he never in any ſhape endeavoured to render himſelf agreeable to that Lady, it is very

very unlikely ſhe ſhould feel an inclination for him, violent enough to prejudice her health: that if it is really ſo, which he cannot bring himſelf to believe, though he has the greateſt compaſſion for her, not all the powers on earth ſhall make him violate his faith to me; and that did he not adore me as he does, and were I not the delight of his ſoul, his word, his honour, which have been ſo long pledged to me, would be held too ſacred by him ever to be infringed: Nor can I, touched as I am with the affliction of Lady Julia and the ſufferings of her father, prevail on him to recede ſo far at leaſt from his reſolutions, as to give them any hopes till ſhe is a little recovered.—Wild, and unwarrantable pity, he ſays, is a kind of diſſimulation, ſcandalous and diſhoneſt, of which nothing ſhall induce him to be guilty.—

This,

This, I think, is the firſt diſpute we have had: he was rather angry with me, while I ſat weeping by his ſide, for I muſt pity Lady Julia, I muſt feel compaſſion for the woman who loves my Wentworth, and whoſe paſſion for him is unreturned. —But his anger did not laſt long: my tears ſoon melted him; while he preſſed me in his arms, he fondly wiped them away, and warmly praiſed my enchanting ſenſibility.

This, however, will probably turn out a very vexatious affair. Lord G—m is abſolutely deſpairing, and nobody poſſeſſes any ſteadineſs of mind, but my cruel Harry: forgive me, my beloved Wentworth, for calling you ſo; you know but too well, that were you otherwiſe, with regard to Lady Julia, I ſhould ſoon be in her mournful ſituation.

I can write no more upon this diſagreeable ſubject, till I hear more about it. Adieu my Annabell. When ſhall I ſubſcribe myſelf your happy, as well as

Your affectionate

L. W?

LETTER LXVII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

SIR Edward Balchen again makes his appearance among us. He only ſtaid away, when he could be of no ſervice. I have received from him many particulars relating to the Earl's behaviour, and Lady Julia's illneſs, of which I might have remained entirely ignorant, but for this generous friend. He tells me that he

he has great reaſon to ſuſpect Lord C. of ſome unjuſt proceedings in this affair, for he can never believe that Lady Julia is poſſeſſed of ſenſibility enough to fall ſick for love of a man whom ſhe has ſeen but ſeldom, and of whom ſhe knows but little, who has never taken the leaſt ſtep to engage her affections. By what I can learn, continued he, from a converſation with the Earl himſelf upon this ſubject, the impoſſibility of introducing ſuch a very conſiderable fortune as Lord G—m poſſeſſes into his family, has more diſconcerted him, than the loſs of ſuch a ſon as Wentworth.

This avaricious nobleman, it ſeems, though he has a fine eſtate, and no child but Lady Julia, upon finding that Lord G—m's fortune was conſiderably larger than he imagined it was, a circumſtance he was not acquainted with till his ſon's marriage-articles

articles were drawn, could not bear the diſappointment with patience: and as his daughter was ſuddenly taken ill, he availed himſelf of her illneſs, to quarrel with Lord G—m, hoping thereby to extort money from him.—This, continued Sir Edward, I take to be the true ſtate of the caſe, and I am ſorry to ſee a perſon, with whom I am obliged to be connected, act in ſo infamous a manner. It was doubtleſs exceedingly wrong in Lord G—m, to make the propoſals he did without conſulting his ſon: but as Wentworth never viſited in the family, nor I believe ever ſaw Lady Julia out of your company, but once, by meer accident, he cannot be expected to comply with them. If ſhe had the leaſt penetration in the world, nay, if ſhe could only open her eyes, one would think it impoſſible for her to be ignorant of Wentworth's attention to you, eſpecially

when ſhe ſaw you almoſt always together.

I was, I own, pleaſed with theſe conjectures of Sir Edward's, and began to conceive hopes, that if things were as he imagined, his noble couſin might be bought off.—

As Wentworth now joined us, I communicated what Sir Edward had juſt been telling to me. He was, at firſt, ſtartled to find a man, whoſe rank and ſituation in life, ought ſo far to have ſet him above all pecuniary advantages, as to make him deteſt ſuch mean proceedings to acquire them ſo ſuſpected, but when he conſidered coolly upon this intelligence, he began to think that there was no improbability in Sir Edward's conjectures: and he the more readily fell into this way of thinking, becauſe he ſaid, that though he had never obſerved Lady Julia's behaviour

to

to him with much attention, he imagined that if ſhe had been ſo violently prejudiced in his favour, ſome mark of it would have eſcaped her, which he could not have over looked, though he might not have wiſhed to take notice of it.

There I differ from you, Harry, ſaid Sir Edward.—Nothing is leſs eaſily diſcovered, nor with more difficulty attained, than a woman's love: nay, don't laugh, cried he, ſeeing me ſmile at this aſſertion, I can prove what I ſay, though you are yourſelf indeed, a ſtrong inſtance againſt me. But where ſhall we meet with a woman ſo exquiſitely handſome, with ſo fine an underſtanding, ſo very free from coquetry, and at the ſame time poſſeſſed of ſo much delicate ſenſibility, as yourſelf: and perhaps nobody but Wentworth would ever have found you ſo; you were born with kindred ſouls, and formed only to

make each other happy. But I will go to Julia, and endeavour to know from herſelf if I am right or not in this affair.

You are very obliging, ſaid I, but if ſhe really loves my Harry, treat her with tenderneſs; ah, don't be too ſharp in your converſation with her. I am ſure ſhe has a gentle heart, and I wiſh you may meet with one of as tender a make to reward you for all your friendſhip to us.

Of ſuch a one, ſaid Sir Edward, I have abſolutely no hopes at all.— There was never any perſon, there never will exiſt any perſon half ſo lovely, ſo gentle as yourſelf, and I muſt be loved full as well, if not better than Harry, before I can be prevailed on to part with my ſtubborn heart.

What!

What! better loved, cried Wentworth, laughing heartily? do you hear him, my ſweet girl? He has the aſſurance to hint that you do not love me enough. If that's the caſe, Lucy, I will not be contented.

Faith, you may, replied the blunt Baronet, for no man has more reaſon to be contented.—With this ſhort ſpeech, he left us in a hurry, and as I can, at preſent, give you no further information, I ſhall bid you adieu, till the next poſt. I am, my dear,

Your's, ever affectionately,

L. W.

LETTER LXVIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

I HAVE had a thouſand fears ſince Sir Edward left us, leſt he ſhould be too harſh with his fair couſin. Though he has a very good heart, and a noble diſpoſition, I don't take him to be poſſeſt of that tenderneſs which is ſo charming in my Wentworth: but I may be miſtaken: for as I never encouraged his addreſſes, I am but a very indifferent judge of his real ſentiments: I ſhould imagine, however, that he is, from the handſomeneſs of his own perſon, rather prejudiced againſt women: accuſtomed to be admired from his birth, he has hitherto perhaps been too generally careſſed to think of giving himſelf up entirely to one female. General admiration, in my opinion, is very apt to preſerve both ſexes from

from particular, or improper attachments.—This, therefore, has rendered him difficult and nice, and will make him deſirous to exact more tenderneſs from the woman of his choice, than a man leſs taken notice of by the ladies would be. But he is come back; he interrupts me in the midſt of my reflections.

Well, cried he, I have ſeen Julia, and I allow, for once, that I have been miſtaken. Your charming Harry has made no ſmall impreſſion upon her gentle heart, as you call it, I can aſſure you: but yet, I do not find that love has been the cauſe of her illneſs neither; ſhe owns that ſhe did not ſuſpect your having a paſſion for each other, but as ſoon as her father mentioned you, ſhe knew that all her hopes muſt be blaſted. She ſpoke of you, Miſs Wheatly, in terms ſuitable to your merit, and ſaid, that her father has mortified her extremely,

by not permitting her to return your viſit, as there is nothing which ſhe ſo much deſires, as to continue upon a friendly footing. She wiſhed you all happineſs with Mr. Wentworth, but neither confeſſed nor denied that ſhe was diſappointed, though I urged her cloſely upon the ſubject.—She replied only with ſighs and bluſhes.

Poor Lady Julia, cried I, how very unhappy am I to be the cauſe of a moment's uneaſineſs to her.

You are a lovely girl, anſwered he—but to proceed—I went from her to the Earl, and plainly told him, that his daughter was in a fair way to recover, and that Wentworth had not, in any ſhape, occaſioned her diſorder.

You may be ſure, ſaid his Lordſhip, that ſhe will make any confeſſions

ſions to you about him, to you who are his friend: ſhe has more pride I hope than to ſtoop ſo low.

Pride, my Lord, replied I haſtily, and do you value your daughter for her pride, as you call it? It is the worſt quality that ever entered into the compoſition of a woman. No! give me the gentle, melting girl, not aſhamed to own a tender paſſion for the man who adores her; who glories in her choice, and avows it to all the world.

Pr'ythee have done with your romantic nonſenſe, cried the Earl, enraged; what's all this to Julia? She has not been thought worthy of being loved by the man whom I choſe for her; and her perſiſting to be fond of him, though it provokes me to ſee her ſo weak, will oblige me to compel his father, if poſſible, to keep the promiſe which he made. I will

not have my daughter inſulted, and loſe her into the bargain, for—

Nobody knows when he would have ſtopped, but I, having got my cue, left him to enjoy the pride on which he values himſelf and his family.

He then went to look for Wentworth, and in about an hour, they both returned, accompanied by Lord G—m, who had a letter in his hand which he had juſt received from the Earl, in which he very freely inſiſted upon what he had told Sir Edward. In fact, this letter contained nothing more than a very peremptory demand of Lord G—m's performance of his promiſe, and a broad hint, that the failure of it muſt be attended with the payment of a conſiderable ſum of money to the lawyer who, in that caſe, would wait upon him.—

Didn't

Didn't I tell you how this affair would end, ſaid Sir Edward; take my word for it, his Lordſhip had rather touch a little.—

I abhor ſuch a groſs impoſition, ſaid Lord G—m, but yet I will give up any ſum to complete the happineſs of theſe dear children, their felicity cannot be too dearly purchaſed.

This goodneſs is too much, my dear Sir, ſaid the grateful Wentworth; but I have, I believe, thought of an expedient to prevent your parting with a ſhilling upon this occaſion. I have juſt now received ſome hints from Balchen, which may be of great ſervice, if I have your leave to avail myſelf of them.

Certainly, my dear Harry, replied Lord G—m.

They

They then left me, to conſult among themſelves.—They are deſirous, I ſuppoſe, of ſurpriſing me greatly.

My aunt, in the mean while, came in with a letter from Harriet, now Mrs. Bodens.

I am, ſince my intended marriage, become more a favourite with Mrs. Mordaunt than uſual: ſhe, therefore, very freely communicated to me the contents of this letter. Poor Harriet! She has indeed met with the reward of her imprudence. She is as miſerable as a woman can poſſibly be, who cannot be ſaid to want any of thoſe requiſites which make exiſtence eligible. She has health, ſhe has a competency, and a huſband: but diſappointment and remorſe render her ſufficiently wretched.

My

My own mind is not yet at eaſe, though, I thank Heaven, not from the ſame cauſe. I cannot be happy till I know the reſult of my Wentworth's deſign, till then I bid you adieu.—

Remember how long it is ſince you wrote laſt to

Your ever affectionate

L. W.

LETTER LXIX.

Mrs. WILSON to Miſs WHEATLY.

ILLNESS, my dear Miſs Wheatly, has confined me for ſome time: but though it was of no great conſequence, I could not prevail on Mr. Wilſon,

Wilſon, to let me apply myſelf either to my needle or my pen.

He has inſiſted, you ſay.—Men will inſiſt when they are huſbands, or when they are becoming ſo.

I am greatly diſconcerted at this aukward event, which is likely to put off your marriage, my Lucy; but I hope it will be attended with no diſagreeable conſequences. I cannot, I confeſs, but be of the opinion of Mr. Wentworth and Sir Edward, that this Lady Julia is not ſo violently in love with the former, as the Earl is willing to make you believe.—I never had any notion of women beginning to love firſt, though certainly they are ſometimes ſo forward when the object of her affections is uncommonly amiable.—I fancy, however, that they always ſee, or have ſeen, a tendency in the man to pay them particular attention, or at leaſt, he

muſt appear entirely unembarraſſed by any other attachment, before they can or ought to form any hopes.—A worthy man, rendered unhappy by a diſappointment, or who has loved without meeting with any return, will moſt probably create a paſſion in a woman's breaſt, who is not previouſly engaged, becauſe the compaſſion which his ſituation excites in her may, by indulgence, ripen into a more tender feeling.—This, however, was not, you know, Mr Wentworth's caſe. I think, therefore, that Lady Julia cannot be ſo deeply touched as ſhe is thought to be.

Mr. Wilſon and I were greatly pleaſed with the little, agreeable diſpute between you and your Harry, alſo with his lines inſerted in your's to me; my anſwer is, that I am moſt ready to purchaſe a continuance of that friendſhip with my beloved Miſs Wheatly (which has hitherto given me

me ſo much happineſs) upon the terms propoſed: and ſhall very willingly deliver up all your letters to be peruſed by Mr. Wentworth, as ſoon as you are united, on condition, that he returns them to me, when he has read them (being perfectly acquainted with the value of them) and that he permits a free and regular correſpondence to be carried on for the future between us, if we ſhould again be ſeparated.

Mr. Wilſon and I join our wiſhes, that all your deſires may be ſpeedily accompliſhed: the former ſlily adds, that he is apt to think his Annabell is not much leſs peremptory than the future Mrs. Wentworth: that Annabell declares that ſhe does not feel the compaſſion ſhe once thought ſhe ſhould feel for her dear Lucy, upon ſuch an occaſion; as the loſs of liberty does not appear quite ſo terrible to her as ſhe once imagined it would.

would. A very little time, I hope, will render my Lucy of the ſame opinion, and reſtore her to her

Ever faithful and

Truly affectionate

A. W.

P. S. The orders which Mr. Lawſon your ſteward has received, to prepare the Abbey for your reception, and the new furniture which is come down for ſome of the apartments, have given great joy to every body here: but when they heard at the ſame time, that Mr. Wentworth was to become their Maſter, no words can expreſs their delight.

LETTER LXX.

Miſs WHEATLY to Mrs. WILSON.

WHEN my Harry returned from a conſultation with his father and his friend, he approached me with more ſerioufneſs in his aſpect, than he appeared with when he left me.

I am going, my dear Lucy, ſaid he, with your leave, to make a viſit to Lady Julia.

To Lady Julia, cried I, a little ſurprized.—

Yes, my ſweet love, replied he, if you have no objection. I have a ſtrong fancy that I can prevail on her to give me up, and then, you know, her father muſt conſent to it.

It

It is rather a wild ſcheme, ſaid I, gravely: you really look (for he was dreſt, and made a charming appearance) as if you were formed to diſguſt her—Don't he my Lord?—But go! only remember that I ſhall expect your return with the utmoſt impatience.

So, there's one jealous already, ſaid Sir Edward, laughing at me.

Why now, do you think, my dear Sir Edward, replied I bluſhing, that he is made to perſuade women to hate him? or that, in caſe the firſt ſight of him does not make an impreſſion upon their hearts, they will be able to harden them againſt him, when he ſues to be given up.

We will ſee that preſently, ſaid Sir Edward; (while my Harry ſeized my hand and kiſſed it with tranſport) but come, come, no fooling now; if

if I bring him ſafe back, what will you give me Miſs Wheatly?

Come, Balchen, ſaid my Wentworth, who is fooling now?

They went off together in high ſpirits. Lord G—m then told me, 'twas a propoſal of Harry's, which he thought no bad one: but as it will take up ſome time, continued he, and that you may not be brooding upon it till their return, ſend to Mrs. Mordaunt, and deſire her company with us to Ranelagh. I had never leſs inclination to go to that gay place, but as I know that his Lordſhip had no other view but to amuſe me, I conſented, and my aunt was pleaſed with the party, as ſhe is extremely fond of public diverſions; but certainly I never was ſo weary of any place in my life. The evening was of a tedious length. I was the dulleſt of the company: and though I put all

all the conſtraint in the world on myſelf to appear chearful, never did it ſo aukwardly.

I flattered myſelf that Wentworth would ſoon have ended his viſit, and upon hearing whither we were gone, would have followed us; but no ſuch thing.—In ſhort, I grew too uneaſy to keep my uneaſineſs concealed, and Lord G—m was obliging enough to return home with me, above an hour ſooner than he intended.---

When we came home, we found Sir Edward Balchen ſitting very ſoberly at cribbage with my uncle. We all began, at once, to enquire after Wentworth.

Have you not ſeen him then, ſaid Sir Edward? You muſt certainly have paſſed him upon the road; for as ſoon as he heard that you was gone

to

to Ranelagh, he ordered the chariot to drive thither directly.

But how has he ſucceeded, ſaid Lord G—m?

Why, pretty well, replied Sir Edward. Upon our entrance, we were accoſted by the Earl, who demanded, rather with a ſupercilious air, what his buſineſs was; and whether he came to repeat the inſult which he had offered to his daughter.

I never, my Lord, ſaid Wentworth, forgot the reſpect which I owe to Lady Julia, ſo far as to take ſo great a liberty with her: and if you will give me leave to ſee her, you will find that I ſhall ſtill preſerve the ſame ſentiments of reſpect which I have ever had the honour to feel for her; and to which, if ſhe has no objection, your Lordſhip will, I flatter myſelf, conſent. So ambiguous an addreſs could

could not be immediately comprehended by his Lordſhip.—After having heſitated a few moments, and having fully ſurveyed my friend's perſon, who looked and ſpoke with a particular grace, told him that he would ſend Julia to him, and hoped that ſhe would underſtand him better than he did.

The ſervant was then ordered to ſhew him up into her dreſſing-room. She was not yet well enough to come down ſtairs.—I ſlipped into a very convenient cloſet, with which I was thoroughly acquainted, where I could, unobſerved, ſee them, and hear the conference between them.

We had neither of us waited long before I heard my fair coz. approach with trembling ſteps, and ſoon afterwards ſhe darted in upon him.—I really don't think that I ever ſaw her look ſo handſome. Her illneſs had

had lowered a good deal of that very high colour which ſhe conſtantly had in her cheeks, yet left a delicate pale bluſh, which was heightened enough by the ſight of Wentworth: and his addreſs gave new charms to her perſon.

I ſighed, my dear Annabell, and, ſhall I own it, when I heard that ſhe looked ſo beautiful, though I ſtrove to appear unmoved; but the penetrating Sir Edward, having diſcovered my emotions, gave me a glance, which, accompanied with an arch ſmile, entirely diſconcerted me. He ſaid nothing, however, but thus proceeded.—

Wentworth was certainly not an object to forward the buſineſs which he came about, for in my life I never ſaw him ſo formed to pleaſe. The dignity of his air, the gracefulneſs of his manner, the reſpectful motion of his eyes,

eyes, the ſubmiſſive tone of his voice, all united to render him infinitely inviting, in my opinion; and the Lady, I believe, thought as I did. She however made but a ſmall diſcovery of her ſenſations.

He opened the converſation by expreſſing the concern which he had felt at her illneſs, and the pleaſure which her recovering from it gave him; artfully mentioning alſo, the anxiety which you had felt upon the occaſion, at once to deſtroy her hopes; while his fine perſon, and his addreſs, undeſignedly inſinuating, drew a thouſand ſighs from her, on being obliged to feel that ſhe was in a hopeleſs ſituation. She made but a ſhort reply, and then expreſſed the greateſt eſteem for you, and wiſhed for a continuation of your friendſhip. —This led him to expatiate very much in your praiſe; intermixing with his panegyrics, the ſtrongeſt

ſentiments of gratitude for the eſteem with which you had honoured him, on a very early acquaintance with you, even before he had had the pleaſure of being known to her. He then, by gentle, and almoſt imperceptible degrees, lamented the impoſſibility of his ever being capable of accepting the honour which the Earl her father had intended him, by offering to accept of him for a ſon-in-law: and declared how much ſorrow he felt at finding that my Lord was unwilling to give him up, though he had never, ſhe muſt be ſenſible, taken one ſtep to make himſelf deſerving of ſo great a favour.

In this manner he, at laſt, came to the point (and a tender one it was) to prevail on her to reject his offered hand, leaving nothing unſaid to convince her that he could never be happy with any woman but Miſs Wheatly; and that, in conſequence

of

of his prior, his tender attachment to that Lady, he could not poſſibly be attached to any other woman.

Lady Julia was aſtoniſhed at what ſhe heard: and though ſhe was ſenſibly convinced of the truth of all that Wentworth had ſaid, could not immediately recover herſelf enough to reply: and indeed any woman, hearing him plead ſo eloquently againſt himſelf, would have been ſtaggered; any woman, with even leſs ſenſibility than Julia.—He conquered at laſt; ſhe yielded to his requeſt, made in ſo charming a manner; ſhe complied with his deſire to be given up; ſhe conſented to reject him, but ſhe conſented with a ſhower of tears.

'Twas then I ſuffered for my friend. I knew his gentle nature; I knew his feeling heart; and I ſaw that he was exquiſitely pained to give ſorrow to

ſo innocent a boſom.---He conducted himſelf, however, as he does on every occaſion, irreproachably: he expreſſed the trueſt uneaſineſs in having been obliged to hurt a perſon of her amiable diſpoſition, ever ready to obey the deſires of her father with the moſt dutiful reſignation.---He ſaw, he told her, with the utmoſt regret, the diſquietude which he had occaſioned in her, and therefore would not increaſe it by his preſence, as he was ſo unfortunate; after having added, that he relied on her goodneſs, he took his leave.

Lady Julia, cried I, how ſorry am I to have been the cauſe of ſo much diſtreſs to you!

The entrance of Wentworth put a ſtop to my reflections of this kind. ---His account ſeemed in one reſpect to differ from Sir Edward's; he would never allow that Lady Julia was ſo much

much affected; ſo great is his diffidence concerning his power of pleaſing. Such extreme delicacy muſt always have a charm ſuperior to all others.

They rallied me a little upon my fears: my uncle and Sir Edward, laughing, declared, that I was monſtrouſly jealous of Lady Julia.--- Wentworth ſmiled, delighted.

Adieu, my deareſt Annabell. I certainly have wearied you with the length of this letter; but you will, I know, excuſe every thing from

Your ever faithful

And affectionate friend

L. W.

LETTER LXXI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY fears are now all over, my dear Annabell.---

Yeſterday morning my Harry went in form to viſit Lady Julia; but the ſweet, good girl would not truſt herſelf to a ſecond interview with him. Inſtead, therefore, of being conducted to the Lady, he was introduced to her father, who, though rather out of humour, received him politely; and told him, that he could not imagine why his daughter would not ſee him, but ſuppoſed that they had concerted matters together, as ſhe had poſitively refuſed to ſee him, and gave no other reaſon than that ſhe could not be happy with him.

Wentworth

Wentworth bowed, and left my Lord to make what reflections he pleaſed upon this ſpeech of his; and now every thing is preparing for the day, which was poſtponed upon this occaſion.

Lord G---m applauds his ſon's behaviour: he abſolutely doats on him, and the amiable Harry rejoices in his parent's love.---He tells me that he is not now ſorry our affairs were delayed, becauſe he has diſcovered more tenderneſs in me, though he always thought I had a great deal, than he imagined I was poſſeſſed of. There is no end of his endearments. His affection for me ſeems to increaſe every hour. May it ever do ſo, at leaſt, may it never decreaſe.

Oh! my Annabell, how I tremble when I think of the poſſibility of his loving me leſs! How many, many men have been the tendereſt lovers,

and yet have been totally changed after marriage! I ſhudder with apprehenſion, and yet his principles are, I think, too deeply rooted, to ſuffer him ſo far to change, as to treat me ill; there is, however, a wide difference between the tender love which he now feels for me, and that ſort of decent civility which many women receive after marriage from their huſbands, who were fond lovers before; that cold civility would be more cutting to me, than total neglect. I cannot ſupport the thought. Gracious Heaven! by whom my choice has been directed, protect me from ſuch a trying ſituation! and bleſs me with ſo much diſcretion, modeſty, mildneſs, and gentle affection, that I may for ever preſerve the ineſtimable heart of this moſt beloved man.

I cannot write any longer, my dear Annabell, my worthy friend:---but pray

pray join to mine your fervent prayers for the happineſs of

Your truly affectionate

L. W.

P. S. I am quite happy in finding that my dear Harry will be ſo welcome a gueſt at the Abbey, and that he has already gained the hearts of thoſe who will for the future have reaſon to look upon him as their friend and benefactor.---

I was juſt going to fold up this when Wentworth brought me a letter, which he had a few minutes before received from Sir Edward, in anſwer to a very preſſing invitation which he had given him to be preſent at our marriage. I have copied it for your peruſal; perhaps I may appear vain by having done ſo, as the ſentiments contained in it are ſo very much

much in my favour.--- But if they are the real ones which Sir Edward entertained, the friendly part which he has acted in forwarding, with all his power, an union which he might, on the contrary, have endeavoured to prevent, or at leaſt diſturb, ſhews a greatneſs of mind, and a diſintereſted regard for Mr. Wentworth, which ought to be made known to you, my dear, who are not ignorant of his character, though the incloſed, which I beg to have again, when read, places it in a ſtill higher light than I have yet beheld it.

To Henry Wentworth, Eſq;

You preſs me, my dear Wentworth, with the warmth of a lover, and the importunity of a friend, to be preſent at the ceremony which makes you for ever happy, and at the ſame time deſtroys all my hopes of ever enjoying that felicity.

You

You are no ſtranger to, you have indeed never been ignorant of, the particular inclination with which I have always beheld Miſs Wheatly, and I have never ceaſed to accuſe myſelf of having been the cauſe of your very dangerous illneſs, by my aſſiduities to her; but you alſo will know, that as ſoon as I diſcovered how much you ſuffered for her, I did every thing in my power to repair the injury, of which I had been, undeſignedly, guilty. However, though I acted thus, becauſe I thought it my duty as a friend to you both to do ſo, and becauſe I was ſenſible how exceedingly you deſerved this proof of my eſteem, yet, believe me, Harry, you cannot well conceive the torments which I have endured, in ſeeing the only woman, whom I have hitherto found capable of inſpiring me with a permanent paſſion, loſt to me for ever; and loſt too, in ſuch a manner, that my paſſion for her is conſiderable

conſiderably increaſed by the motives which urge me to give her up.

It is not the extreme livelineſs of her perſon alone, nor the amiable ſimplicity of her manners, which I have never yet ſeen equalled in any of her ſex, united with ſo much elegance accompanying her moſt trifling actions, that charm'd me; but it is that enchanting tenderneſs, that ardent affection which ſhe feels for you, which ſhe has never diſguiſed, but which ſhe diſcovers, nevertheleſs, with ſuch extreme delicacy, and ſuch a winning modeſty, that till I meet with a woman who both feels and expreſſes the tender paſſion for me, in the ſame engaging manner, I cannot think of making a ſurrender of my heart.

With theſe ſentiments, which I find, upon a nearer acquaintance with your Lucy, every hour increaſing upon me, am

am I a proper perſon to be preſent at the ceremony which muſt ſtill endear you more to each other? No, Harry, I am well aſſured, that were I to be preſent, thoſe diabolical paſſions, envy and jealouſy, would certainly diſturb that friendſhip which has hitherto been uninterrupted between us.— That it may remain ſo, excuſe my aſſiſting upon the happy occaſion.— Poſſeſt of your Lucy, you can want no addition to your happineſs; eſpecially as you have my moſt fervent wiſhes for its perpetuity. When I have by time, abſence, or any other attachment, lowered the warmth of my inclination for Miſs Wheatly, you ſhall, my dear Harry, ſee, as uſual,

Your very affectionate

EDWARD BALCHEN.

LETTER LXXII.

Mrs. WENTWORTH to Mrs. WILSON.

IN a little, in a very little time now, my Annabell, will you ſee your friend, your Lucy, after ſo long an abſence, longer than we have yet known.—What pleaſure to return to thoſe with whom we have, from our earlieſt infancy, been accuſtomed to converſe with the moſt friendly intimacy, and who have never been ignorant of our moſt ſecret thoughts.

But muſt I ſtill, with the ſame freedom, ſo agreeable to my inclination, open my heart to you, my dear Mrs. Wilſon?—Have I not, by the ſacred matrimonial tie, forfeited the liberty of communicating every ſecret of my heart to any perſon but him, who has now indiſputably a right to ſee the inmoſt folds of it.—But he is here.

here.—He will not let me be a moment from him.---He will tell you himſelf every thing that he would have me ſay to you.---I reſign my pen with pleaſure to the dear diſpoſer of that and me.

Mr. WENTWORTH to Mrs. WILSON.

Laſt Tueſday, dear Mrs. Wilſon, was the happy day, which gave your lovely friend, your, and my beloved Lucy, for ever to my fond arms. I will not pretend to deſcribe the felicity which I have felt ſince that delightful moment.---My happineſs can only be encreaſed by attending her to the Abbey, to receive in perſon the affectionate congratulations of our amiable friends. May I not now reckon you and Mr. Wilſon as ſuch? It ſhall, at leaſt, be my conſtant endeavour to deſerve, and to keep the eſteem of all thoſe who are dear to my Lucy. I have alſo a ſtill more intereſting motive to haſten this agreeable

able journey, my dear girl's health demands it. The manner of living in town, and the perpetual agitation in which her mind has been for ſome months paſt, have rendered her unable to go through the fatigue of a faſhionable town life. She is not ill, yet I ſhall not enjoy any true ſatisfaction till I ſee her once again in her native air; till I accompany her to all thoſe favourite places which formerly uſed to give her ſo much pleaſure; and by every mark of aſſiduity, endeavour to increaſe her fondneſs for them.---

Bleſt with ſo dear, ſo amiable a wife, ſo excellent a friend, ſo charming a companion, how tranſporting will it be to retire a while from the noiſe and buſtle of life, and to paſs my happy hours with the amiable choice of my heart, ſurrounded by thoſe who almoſt adored her from her infancy, and who, by relating a thou-

thouſand litt'e narrations of her paſt actions, will, if poſſible, increaſe my tenderneſs for her.

Mrs. WENTWORTH to Mrs. WILSON, in Continuation.

I can ſit by no longer, my Annabell, and ſee myſelf deified in this manner; becauſe I am but too conſcious that I do not deſerve to be treated in ſo exalted a ſtyle.—To prove the truth of my aſſertion, I begin with an act of diſobedience.—I have got back my pen, juſt to tell you, that in a week we ſhall ſet out for D—ſhire, accompanied by Lord G—m, and Mr. and Mrs. Farnham. —We would have perſuaded Sir Edward, with my uncle and aunt, to be of our party.—The former has already giving his reaſons for not favouring us with his company. Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt cannot bear to think of quitting London till the ſummer is farther advanced, that is, till the

the pleaſanteſt part of the ſeaſon is over; in my opinion, at leaſt.

My uncle, who is really become quite fond of me, inſiſts upon my ſending him a journal, and to tell him how we paſs our time, where there is, he ſays, no ſociety: he means, no cards.

My aunt cannot poſſibly conceive how one can exiſt in a place ſo remote from every kind of amuſement.

My uncle ſays, the country may do very well for a month or ſix weeks after marriage, longer than that, he will not allow us to be bearable to each other: we muſt then, it ſeems, call in a crowd of company, in order to wile away the time, and render the tedious hours ſupportable.---

Time will ſhew who is in the right. My Harry contradicts all that my uncle

uncle ſays with his eyes; but the latter is this moment come to fetch me down to a ſet of company, who are to ſpend the day with us.

Adieu, therefore, my dear Mrs. Wilſon, till I ſee you. My amiable Mr. Wentworth joins his adieu to mine, and with pleaſure aſſents to my ſubſcribing myſelf

Your ever affectionate

LUCY WENTWORTH.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO WILLIAM MORDAUNT, Eſq; in *Hill-Street*.

AFTER having reſided three months at the Abbey, my dear uncle, I write the letter which you have long demanded from me.

You

You allowed me, at ſetting out, ſix weeks, at fartheſt, to be happy in, that is, to be happy in the ſociety of my amiable Harry, without feeling the diſagreeable laſſitude which was, you told me, felt by all lovers after that time, eſpecially of married lovers. But you did not conſider, Sir, when you made ſuch an aſſertion, that few, very few people meet with the difficulties and impediments which we have encountered, and that the generality of marriages between people of fortune are adjuſted by thoſe who only calculate the mutual advantages in the money-way, without ever conſulting either the taſte or inclination of the contracting parties.— But you muſt be ſenſible, that my union with Mr. Wentworth is not to be conſidered in the ſame light.— An exact ſimilarity of ſentiments and manners directed us in the choice of each other, and confirmed that choice: and I believe I may now venture

venture to add, that we are more attached to each other than ever: nor can I wiſh or imagine it poſſible to enjoy greater felicity than I do at preſent in the company of my dear Mr. Wentworth, and in ſeeing him ſo beloved and eſteemed by every body. The delight which I feel upon this occaſion is not to be deſcribed.

But you want particularly to know, my dear uncle, in what manner I can poſſibly fill up the hours in a country life without thinking them tedious: I will ſatisfy your curioſity, though perhaps, at the ſame time, I ſhall excite your aſtoniſhment.—

We riſe early theſe fine ſummer mornings: and as a large part of the day muſt be dedicated to our agreeable gueſts, Mr. Wentworth and I, ſeize that leiſure time to walk out among the cottages round us, to enquire

quire who wants our aſſiſtance, oppreſſed either with ſickneſs and poverty, and to give them all the neceſſary help which their ſituation demands: to obſerve alſo what uſe thoſe who have already ſhared our bounty make of it, and to find out proper methods to render it ſtill more beneficial to the deſerving. During theſe little excurſions, we feaſt our eyes with the variety of beautiful proſpects around us, which, ſhifting every moment as we move, excite our grateful hearts to pour forth praiſes to the Supreme Being, who has thus plentifully laviſhed his bleſſings on us, and given us powers to enjoy them, and to be thankful for them; which we endeavour to exerciſe in imitating, as far as our weak capacities will let us, the giver of all good things, by ſtriving to make thoſe happy whom he has more immediately placed under our protection.—

In our return home, with our minds thus ſeriouſly, and happily diſpoſed, on whom can we call with more propriety than on our excellent Rector Mr. Worthy? we commonly find this benevolent being in his garden, cultivating his plants, from which he ſelects one for our particular notice, and reads a very entertaining lecture upon it: for he is an admirable botaniſt, as well as an exemplary divine, and by his botanical knowledge renders himſelf highly uſeful to his poor pariſhioners, and ſaves the expences of an apothecary, upon any ſlight diſorder, for them.

While Mr. Worthy is thus employed abroad, his agreeable wife and daughters are not idle at home: and before we go, pay us the civility of a good morrow. The neatneſs and ſimplicity of their dreſs, the humility and decency of their deportment, give us the moſt pleaſing proofs of

of their domeſtic felicity. While we contemplate the felicity of theſe amiable people, we increaſe our own.—

By the time that we return to the Abbey, breakfaſt is not only ready, but Lord G---m, and Mrs. Farnham are almoſt ready for it; while Mr. Farnham comes from the boat in which he has been paddling, in his cap and ſlippers, as hungry as a hunter. Lord G---m never fails to railly him pretty handſomely on his immoderate fondneſs for an element on which he has more than once been in the greateſt danger. Mrs. Farnham adds her remonſtrances to his Lordſhip, but to little purpoſe, for as ſoon as breakfaſt is diſpatched, he returns to his watery amuſement, which engages his attention ſo much, that we ſeldom ſee him again till dinner.---Now and then, indeed, he rides out with my Lord, but the boat is his hobby.

When

When I retire to the management of my domeſtic affairs, my dear Mr. Wentworth employs himſelf with Lawſon, in ſurveying his eſtate, inſpecting his accounts, and regulating thoſe things which too many gentlemen, through idleneſs or inattention, leave entirely to their ſtewards.

My Lord ſometimes accompanies his ſon in theſe employments, but more frequently rides out, and calls on Sir Thomas Meadows, Mr. Grierſon and Mr. Wilſon.---Mr. Wilſon has purchaſed a pretty little place at about a mile's diſtance from us, and my Lord often brings him home, with my dear Annabell, to dinner.

After a chearful meal, if we are not particularly engaged on any very entertaining ſubject, we retire to the muſic-parlour, and make a ſmall concert among ourſelves, which is often greatly improved by Sir Tho-

mas's family, and the Miſs Worthys, who have both good voices. In this manner, with ſtrolling in the park and gardens, reading and drawing, is my time ſufficiently taken up, ſo that I have not the leaſt apprehenſion of the vapours.

I forgot to mention one of our amuſements, that is, writing; Harry and Mr. Wilſon have, to the vaſt ſurpriſe of their wives, diſcovered, I aſſure you, more than common talents for poetry. The former has promiſed to write ſome verſes annually upon my birth-day, as long as I continue to deſerve them. Have I not great encouragement to behave well? But, poſitively, my dear uncle, if you laugh at us, I will ſend a whole volume of their ſcribbling to you, by way of mortification.

A regular correſpondence is alſo carried on with Sir Edward Balchen, who

who has left London. His lively ſallies, and whimſical reflections, afford us much entertainment. He is a very amiable character, but he ſometimes, I think, makes too refined diſtinctions. I wiſh he may not ſuffer for his delicacy of ſentiment, which he carries, in my humble opinion, too far for his own happineſs.

But I ſhall write a volume, inſtead of a letter, without communicating what you want to know, that is, particular intelligence about my good neighbours. Will it not be ſufficient to tell you, that they really deſerve to be called ſo? They are ready to chat, to laugh, to ſing, to dance, to ride, to run, to do every thing, in ſhort, in their power to, increaſe my felicity, and the happineſs of my ever tender, my ever eſtimable Harry, whom they almoſt adore, and who

knows no joy but in ſeeing me happy.---

Can I ſay any thing more to make you come down to us.---Yes, my Lord G---m, I aſſure you, who has ever moved in the moſt faſhionable circle, ſo far from being weary of us, begins even to doat on a country life.---

Do, my dear, uncle, come down to the Abbey: we will be as gay as we can poſſibly be.---Come and partake of our innocent pleaſures: if they ſhould prove to be flat and inſipid, you may, I fancy, find two or three packs of cards at Sir Thomas's.

Am I not grown quite ſaucy? My Harry laughs, but joins warmly with me, to wiſh for your's and Mrs. Mordaunt's company here, who will, I know, believe me to be her and your

Ever affectionate niece,

LUCY WENTWORTH.

P. S.

P. S. If we do not ſee you ſoon, you will certainly be puniſhed for your remaining in town, with letters from me ten times more tireſome than this is.

FINIS.

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